

no. 1



**LITTLE SANDY
REVIEW**

30 c

EDITOR'S COLUMN

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by Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake

I guess it is customary at the start of such a venture to declare some kind of a creed and format which, after being announced, is then put into practice and carried out. Ours is a very simple one. We are two people who love folk music very much and want to do all we can to help the good in it grow and the bad in it perish. After reading this issue, it should be very apparent to anyone who we think is good and who we think is bad and why. If you disagree, fine. More power to you. By all means, write in and we'll print your letter. We also want to print a complete coverage on all folk records released that would be of interest to the American folk-record buyer. Next month, for instance, we will run reviews on some American folk records made in England and featuring Alan Lomax, Peggy Seeger, Guy Carawan, Jack Elliott, Shirley Collins, Sandy Paton, and John Cole. These are excellent records and generally unknown to most people in the States, but very easily available. For those that want advance information, they might write to Ken Lindsay, Agate and Company, Ltd., 77 Charing Cross Road, London W.C. 2.

England, and ask for some free catalogs and a free record list prepared especially for readers of THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW. I suggest you send airmail as regular postage takes about 30 days.

Subscriptions are available to THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW, \$3.00 for 12 issues or one year (and, by all means, do subscribe). Send check or money order (no stamps, please) to Paul Nelson, THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW, 3220 Park Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minnesota. Comments are welcomed at all times and all questions will be answered if at all possible. Your subscription will be appreciated.

From time to time, we will also run discographies on various folk artists and album reviews of certain older LP's that we consider folk classics. There will also be articles. Next month's will be concert reviews of artists who have appeared in the Midwest this year: Pete Seeger, Guy Carawan, Cynthia Gooding, Rolf Cahn, the Weavers, Marais and Miranda, and Bob Gibson. Also, we will try to clean up on all the records we missed this month due to lack of space, plus all the new releases. See you next month.

THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW is published each month in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and edited by Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson. Our special thanks to Dave Glover, our regular contributor, and Doris Nelson.

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VOL. I LACKS NOS. 1 & 8



**THE LITTLE SANDY
REVIEW**

HARVARD
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FEB 8 1972

POETRY ROOM

30 c

Thr 200.5 (2-10)

The beautiful young lady gracing our cover is Britain's Shirley Elizabeth Collins -- you can hear her and see still another luscious photo on Folkways 3564. This photo is by Colin Tait for Collector Records, England.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

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BY JON PANKAKE AND PAUL NELSON

If Milton Okun is reading this issue, please don't think we hate you, Milt. We just hate what you have been doing to folk music lately. Rather than thinking that this is our special big Hate-Milt Okun-Issue, just regard it as a general Give 'Em Hell blast at any and all phonies who water, dilute, and pervert American folk music -- transforming it into Folkum rather than folk song ... Our concert reviews were crowded out again and will appear in the next issue along with an analysis of the rejuvenated Stinson folk line ... Watch for Izzy Young's reviews of retrospective folk records (beginning with Fred Gerlach's THE GALLOW'S POLE) soon to appear in the LSR ... Marais and Miranda have a new LP on Kapp -- which seems to be doing a lot of folk albums lately. Also on Kapp is a record we overlooked last month, by

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QUALITY CONTROL MARK

Hillel, that you may be interested in ... Cathie Taylor, the semi-folk singer who made such a big stir on the Ernie Ford TV show, can be heard on a Capitol LP 1359, A LITTLE BIT OF SWEETNESS ... We hear Fred Hellerman gave his issue of LSR back to Izzy Young. If it were anybody but Fred Hellerman, we might care ... Paul Nelson most definately did NOT write the poem that appeared in the latest Gardyloo above his name. Our apologies to Billy Faier ... Frankie Laine has released a folk album for Columbia that the austere dignity of this publication doesn't permit us to review. The cover shot is wild, a la Woody Guthrie ... Rumor has it that Bing Crosby is coming out with a folk LP containing 44 songs. NO MORE CANE ON THE BRAZOS? ... All we need now is Dave Brubeck and Lawrence Welk doing an album of Southern Mt. Songs and the Pepsi-Cola Sociables to team up with Belafonte and Bibb for a joint chain-gang album ... Minneapolitans were recently thrilled to hear the amazing Wedgely Todd and his banjo. This kid, with his easy-going grin, is one of the best pickers -- bar none -- and should go a long, long way ... Readers are hereby asked to curse, bless, cuss, question, or argue with the editors via the mails. We are open-minded and love controversy. So WRITE -- we know you're out there because we can hear you breathing ... Guy Carawan will be back in October ...

Also, persons receiving complimentary copies of this magazine are hereby asked to subscribe or suffer the horrors of not seeing any further LITTLE SANDYS. Response has generally been very fine and we can now afford to set up a limited press run for subscribers only. Subscriptions are \$3.00 a year for 12 issues and may be obtained via mail at 3220 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Subscribe now and don't miss an issue. Back copies of LSR No. 1 are available from Izzy Young at The Folklore Center, 110 MacDougal Street, New York 12. We are completely sold out. Subscribe now. The gravy train is wrecked ... Folkniks visiting New York mustn't pass up Izzy Young's new folk song cabaret, THE FIFTH PEG. Located only two blocks from Washington Square, the PEG always has the tops in singers (and intelligent audiences). Be sure to catch the Monday night free-for-all session, a really informal and spirited get-together ... CORRECTION: Our review of Malvina Reynold's album should have read, of course, "It would be pretty hard to keep FROM grinning all the way through THE DAY THE FREEWAY FROZE," and not "keep grinning" as was printed ... Jac Holzman of Elektra has in possession an unreleased album of Bascom Lamar Lunsford. We hereby ask all true folk song-lovers to join (continued on page 36)

THE ENGLISH RECORD SCENE

All of the following records and many, many more are available at prices which in most cases are lower than the American standard prices for phonograph records and may be obtained from Ken Lindsay, Agate and Company, Ltd., 77 Charing Cross Road, London W.C. 2, England. Ask for the free American Folk Music Listing prepared especially for readers of THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW. All the records are attractively packaged and of high technical quality. Import duties are only a dollar or two in most areas.

Until Alan Lomax's first commercial recordings came out some time back, a great portion of the folksong public was unaware that this man, in addition to his innumerable other distinctions, is one of America's finest folksingers. This reviewer has heard no active modern singers other than Pete Seeger (and his genius with audiences) and Jean Ritchie (and the heritage she shares with her music) who can be so commanding and expressive as Lomax. Vocally, Lomax is not sensationally talented -- but his softly-accented voice is youthful and virile, as well as being completely in control of emotional content. Alan quite naturally does best on songs essentially South-Southwestern in

character -- the Texas-Louisiana Negro songs and cowboy songs from points West -- and his repertoire relies mainly on them. ALAN LOMAX SINGS GREAT AMERICAN BALLADS (HMV) is an extension of the work he has released in America on the Kapp and Tradition labels. In this album, you can hear him skillfully balance the typically American combination of coarse language, savage imagery, and tenderly-lyric melody that constitutes BUFFALO SKINNERS; daringly and successfully recreate, in dialect, Leadbelly's FRANKIE; rock triumphantly with LONG JOHN and its hauntingly African refrain; and spin the tragic tale of PO LAZARUS -- among the 15 songs performed. Guy Carawan sits in with banjo and joins a chorus or two, while Lomax provides second guitar to the lead of a person named Nick Wheatstraw (who tends to get a bit sporty at times).

MURDERER'S HOME (Nixa) is almost a duplicate of Lomax's Tradition album of prison field recordings. Some of the English masters have been re-recorded with clarifying remarks by Lomax, and the tracks of prison guitar instrumentals replace some of the songs appearing in the American album. Lomax is something of a champion of good rock-and-roll, and ALAN LOMAX

SINGS finds him having a bit of fun singing along with a horrendous outfit called Dave Lee's Bandits (featuring John Cole on the harmonica). The four songs (this is an EP), done remarkably by Lomax (who triumphs over the jangle of noise created by the Bandits), are valid American barrel-house blues, however, and a listener will certainly have fun listening to Lomax have fun. And I must say that American teenagers are being deprived of hearing one of the best "rock-and-roll" singers on record.

Peggy Seeger, according to current reports, is enjoying quite a vogue in London, and Lee Hays tells us that she can be seen zipping about the town on a red motor-scooter -- wearing a crash helmet and carrying guitar and banjo strapped to the rear fender. One of the most interesting of Peggy's English records, oddly enough, is the infamous little EP called ORIGINS OF SKIFFLE -- in which the Nixa people recorded drums and bass over finished tracks of straight folk songs and tried to palm the whole works off as skiffle. However unfair this is to Peggy, the album comes off as good clean fun rather than outrage. One tends to chuckle at the corny rhythmic ideas of the drummer -- i.e. while Peggy sings and plays FREIGHT TRAIN, he attempts to sound a choo-choo effect with drum and brushes! SAIL AWAY LADIES and CUMBERLAND GAP, sung by Peggy,

Guy Carawan, and Isla Cameron, are so full of spirited picking, wild harmonies, and rip-snorting fun that it would take the dubbing of a Milt Okun and his entire orchestra and chorus to do any damage to these songs. You may argue with Peggy's conceptions of a talking BRING ME LITTLE WATER SYLVIE, but her voice is so fascinating to listen to that the number is brought off well. Peggy appears with kid sisters Penny and Barbara on EP's COME ALONG JOHN and SHINE LIKE A STAR (the former is children's songs with the title song and AROUND THE KITCHEN being especially pleasing; the latter is Christmas songs from Ruth Seeger's book) and owners of the Folkways Seeger family album will readily testify what charmers the Seeger girls are. Peggy's solo LP, PEGGY SEEGER (Topic), contains some of the first recorded work (1957) she did; and is highly interesting for a variety of reasons -- two of which are the wildly poetic notes by Alan Lomax and the odd cover photo of Peggy. Her FAIR AND TENDER MAIDENS isn't quite as good as brother Pete's, but her LADY OF CARLISLE is far better -- so much so that it bears close study by all amateur pickers who would adapt Library of Congress recordings to their own styles without losing the essences of the songs or becoming slavish imitators. I listened to Basil May's original on AAFSL #1 recently, and must concede that Peggy

has done a remarkable recreation. Her mastery of the ballad is also evident on I NEVER WILL MARRY (done Carter Family style) and THE WIFE OF USHER'S WELL (superb guitar work here). In addition to being able to melt hearts with her soft singing, Peggy can pick the banjo a bit too. Three banjo instrumentals are included here (SOLDIER'S JOY, SHADY GROVE, GEORGIA BUCK) and are guaranteed to bug the eyes of the most blase Bluegrassers. When Peggy got together with Guy Carawan to do any album of courting and play-party songs, AMERICA AT PLAY (HMV), the musical ideas apparently really flew. Some of them are not carried to their proper conclusions, some are excellent, and others are, at best, half-baked. The banjo and vocal duet of SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN is just short of being a real musical achievement. Listen to the way Peggy's snapping single-string style plays off against Guy's simpler, punchier frailing. And their SKIP TO MY LOU makes this old warhorse frolic like a colt. The standout cut on the record, and one of the best things Peggy has ever recorded, is her solo of TRAIN ON THE ISLAND -- a fragment of a song she turns into a personal tour de force and a lingering, lonesome impression of love. Guy's solos are less successful, the best being two of his standards -- OLD BLUE and GROUNDHOG.

But Peggy and Guy somehow got off the track on their collaboration for Nixa's WE SING AMERICA. Nixa seems to emphasize the popular appeal of folk music and the liner notes on all Nixa records blab continuously about the new "hybrid" music that is emerging from the mixture of pop and folk music (above the signature of A. L. Lloyd, yet). If what is heard on much of this album is a "new" music, I want nothing to do with it -- and exceedingly regret seeing Peggy Seeger and Guy Carawan mixed up in it. On this disc, for instance, we find the tiny-voiced Peggy singing the lead on NO MORE CANE ON THIS BRAZOS in a maddening pop-blues style -- and Guy backs her up with some of what was known in Bing Crosby's day as "groaning." This same combination tackles MIDNIGHT SPECIAL also, and the whole idea makes me think of those gag posters Izzy Young once mentioned: Richard Dyer-Bennet Sings the Blues, Harry and Jeannie West Sing Elizabethan Part Songs, etc. In addition, Nixa apparently uses a recording process that gives an electronically echoey sound to their stuff. This is especially hard on Peggy's voice, for on this disc she sounds gratefully shrill and hard-voiced. Guy fares even worse, for two of his numbers, BIG ROCK BLUES and I'M A STRANGER HERE, are buried beneath the boiler-factory

sound of Dave Lee's Bandits -- so buried in fact that one suspects that Nixa is up to their dubbing tricks again. Left untampered are Guy's FEEL LIKE AN ENGINE, CRIPPLE CREEK, SINNER MAN, WEARY BLUES, and Guy's and Peggy's THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE and JOHN GILBERT IS THE BOAT. All of Guy's solos are to be found on his Folkways series -- which leaves the two duets, both nice, the sole reason for obtaining this miscarried album. Guy is fortunately left to his own devices on his solo album, Topic's MOUNTAIN SONGS AND BANJO TUNES, but again the best songs have been recorded in this country. However, Carawan fans may want to hear him do the seven songs unrecorded so far in the United States: CRAWDAD, IDA RED, YOUNG MAN WHO WOULDN'T HCE CORN, WHO'S GONNA SHOE YOUR PRETTY LITTLE FOOT, CHILLY WINDS, KENTUCKY MOONSHINER, and TURTLE DOVE. Some are done well and some are not.

Record collectors who are as enchanted by Shirley Elizabeth Collins (see our cover) as I am will certainly want to catch THE FOGGY DEW (Collector EP) wherein Miss Collins does the title song, GEORDIE, BRIGG FAIR, and THE BERKSHIRE TRAGEDY. She is sensitive, accomplished, beautiful, and a whale of a singer -- and I regard her experiment of crossing American banjo accompaniments with traditional English ballads as a re-

sounding success. In future recordings, Miss Collins would do well to forego the use of Robin Hall and his obsessive bass runs -- the sole drawback of the album.

Sandy Paton's FOLK SONGS OF LOVE (Collector EP) finds a good singer tackling songs he cannot handle. Sandy is a bit of a crooner, and he sounds fine on British material, but songs like THE COLORADO TRAIL and ALBERTA sound ridiculous when sung with a Ronald Coleman accent -- "Ahl-beht-ah, let youh haih haaang loow ..."

Three of the best of the English records are by American folksinger and rambling man Jack Elliott, who slams, slaps, and drawls out Woody Guthrie songs in a Texas-Oklahoma style of picking and singing plus a little harmonica here and there. Jack is as winning and as good a folksinger as I've heard in a long time and all three of his records are strongly recommended. His only previous recorded work that I've been able to find is three songs on an Elektra album. If any of you readers know of more, we would appreciate a listing. By far the best of Elliott's English records (all on Topic) is one called JACK TAKES THE FLOOR, which "sets out to capture Jack as an entertainer as well as a folksinger" and certainly does so in admirable fashion: the record is much like a concert recording, complete with spoken introductions, chatter,

imitations, and much fine singing. Best of all are Jack's superlative versions of MULESKINNER BLUES and NEW YORK TOWN. MULESKINNER is done wide open in the Woody Guthrie manner, full of yodels, laughs, hey-heys, thumping, whamming guitar, and more all-fired fun than you can shake a stick at. It is by far the best MULESKINNER BLUES I have ever heard and Elliott is in complete control of every nuance and inflection in guitar and voice -- the long, ear-shattering note near the end and the cascading hey-hey-hey-hey-hey will split your face in a grin a mile wide. Jack builds the song exactly the way he wants it with some expert guitar work, adding and taking away intensity and playing on the listener's emotions to bring about the right response. Hardly less good is NEW YORK TOWN, in which Elliott does a remarkable imitation of Guthrie and himself doing the song. It's all done in good fun and is almost like having a Woody Guthrie record of the song -- so good is Elliott's imitation. Other high spots on the LP are COCAINE, a song Jack learned from Rev. Gary Davis, and on which he plays some fine country rag-time guitar of the type that Mrs. Elizabeth Cotton plays. His approach to DINK SONG is a good one also: he does not croon it like so many singers do.

Disc Collector

"THE COUNTRY RECORD
COLLECTOR'S BIBLE"

Joe Nicholas, Editor



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Instead he does it as it should be done: as a rough-hewn prison love song and is not afraid to let his voice crack and go harsh to bring about the deep hurt and wanting that is in the song. Then there is a charming Negro lullaby, BLACK BABY, that demonstrates Elliott's wide range of understanding in subject matter. Not as successful, however, are two Negro songs by way of Huddie Ledbetter (OL' RILEY and GREY GOOSE) in which Elliott approaches his material in so daringly ethnic a manner that one must at least respect him for trying, if not succeeding.

WOODY GUTHRIE'S BLUES, an 8-inch LP, features Jack singing some of Woody's songs, including the seldom-recorded 1913 MASSACRE and LUDLOW MASSACRE, done excellently here. They are not quite up to Woody at his best (as the liner notes claim), but they are well-done and sufficiently interesting. Jack is not as spirited here as he usually is, but TALKING SAILOR is well-thought-out and executed: the guitar is both driving and subtle and fits the song nicely. This is a good tribute to Woody Guthrie by a man who knew him well: not like Vanguard's miserable Cisco Houston LP of last month.

Derroll Adams joins Elliott in an LP called THE RAMBLING BOYS and the results and consequences are in the tradition of

The New Lost City Ramblers -- Texas style. Singing together on RICH AND RAMBLING BOY, EAST VIRGINIA BLUES, MOTHER'S NOT DEAD, and ROLL ON BUDDY, Derroll and Jack get a rollicking lots-of-fun sound that is as infectious as can be. Adams is a banjo-player who styles himself after Bescom Lamar Lunsford and does a solo MR. GARFIELD that is very good. Jack's in his usual fine form on such songs as Woody Guthrie's version of DANVILLE GIRL and ARKANSAS TRAVELLER, and does a splendid BUFFALO SKINNERS, a song so inherently powerful that it is almost bigger than life, almost surrealistic in scope. It is, all in all, a fine album, and well worth getting. There is an odd sentence in the liner notes by John Hasted that makes one wonder: "Their (Jack and Derroll's) songs are very much as they learned them from the masters of folk art, so highly developed on the North American Continent." Perhaps the American folk boom in England is overshadowing England's own fine folk tradition. If this be the case, it should not be so. I am glad the English people like American folk music, but I do hope they do not ignore their own.

MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY
Collected by John Cohen
(Folkways 2317)

"Hazard, Kentucky is, in 1959, an area reminiscent of the Depression of the 1930's. People there say that these are the worst times they have ever seen. They see no prospects of change for the better ahead of them...."

Thus state the introductory notes of John Cohen's field trip record -- the most important documentary recording of American life and music commercially released in God knows how long. The notes are included in a 32-page booklet of text and photographs that could well serve as a model for future such documentaries. The photos alone deserve more extensive comment than this review can allow -- for they, in actuality, are illustrations of the music. Here are the faces of the mountain people -- lank, gaunt, fierce, enduring; the very qualities of their music. Here are the soulful eyes of the people who work and suffer and live and whose rocklike, earthlike visages have unsettled the satisfied and disturbed the complacent throughout history; who preceded and will follow us; who will endure. For certainly endurance is the theme of these people and their "hillbilly" music -- just as certainly as it is the theme of the blues: a grim and unwavering knowledge that life will be lived; that misery

and weakness do not defeat in their destruction. To me, the music cannot be described in any way possible — all categories, discussions, and arguments become just so much meaningless babble when one is listening to and experiencing the music. It is quite impossible to describe or analyze a dirt-poor farmer singing I WISH I WERE A SINGLE GIRL AGAIN, or two Kentuckians preparing a comic skit to sing at the opening of a new drugstore — these phenomena can only be heard, and pondered, and heard again and again until they become part of one's own understanding. About the record itself, I can only say that it contains 31 bands of music recorded in kitchens, porches, and yards near Hazard, Kentucky. To those listeners prepared to put many hours of study into the record, in order to appreciate what many lifetimes have put into it; to gain a minute insight into the human experience therein revealed, the album is unqualifiedly commended. Those seeking "easy listening" or "light entertainment" had best keep hands off — they might get hurt.

Mr. Cohen's original tapes now rest in the Library of Congress, where such unselfish gifts as his are barely keeping alive an institution shrouded in the most disgusting petty bureaucracy imaginable. To me, it is heartbreaking to realize that dedicated people like Cohen must,

with their own hard earned money and borrowed equipment, take upon themselves the task of an entire nation grown fat and dehumanized and cultureless; and, for no pay, scant encouragement, and little thanks, go about the business of documenting what little remains to us of the heritage we are killing as fast as we possibly can. To the sterile American automatons of the Atomic age, the work of people like Cohen will naturally be valueless — but may those of us who value the culture of our fellow Americans — we who care — anticipate the sentiments of future generations of such Americans and extend to John Cohen our most heartfelt gratitude for his conviction and for this, his achievement.

TRADITIONAL BLUES Vol. 1
Brownie McGhee (Folkways 2421)

The excellent notes on the history of the blues, written by Charles Edward Smith, seem to be the focal point of the album. Brownie seems to consciously sing with attention to historical and stylistic nuance rather than self expression. Thus, there is invaluable material here for the buff and student of the blues — but just plain fans of Brownie's singing may want to pass this up.

ODETTA: BALLAD FOR AMERICANS and other
AMERICAN BALLADS (Vanguard 9066)

It would be hard to imagine even Odetta's most fervent fans being pleased by this LP. Side one is composed of Earl Robinson's BALLAD FOR AMERICANS -- a work which claims to expand folk music to symphonic breadth -- while side two contains eight American folk songs mostly by Woody Guthrie. It's a toss-up which side is the worst. Robinson's "masterpiece" is, to me, a cliché-bound, overly cute piece of pseudo-patriotic claptrap that has about as much to do with folk music as Frank Sinatra does. As for all that baloney about expanding folk music into something symphonic -- who needs it? There is more of a feeling for American music and America in one line of Woody Guthrie than in all 15-odd minutes of the pretentious BALLAD. Folk music surely does not need an Earl Robinson to "improve" it and make it refined and dignified. John LaTouche's dialogue is also properly symphonic-phoney-folky: "I'm the Everybody who is nobody; I'm the Nobody who is everybody.. I'm an American !" What incredible junk! It's bad enough as a high school operetta, but why drag folk music into it? Vanguard makes a weak attempt to tie Side one with Side two by claiming that BALLAD grew out of such songs as THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND,

PAYDAY AT COAL CREEK, etc. If it did, it is certainly not apparent. The notes also state that there is now an Odetta-style guitar influence in today's young folk-pickers. I hope not. For in almost every song on Side two, the guitar is totally wrong -- it is pretty and pop-music bouncy on PAYDAY, one almost expects Dinah Shore to start singing instead of Odetta; it is jangling and ill-suited for GREAT HISTORICAL BUM; etc. And Odetta's singing is not much better. THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND gets a harsh, chain-gang treatment with none of the fine poetic imagery brought out. DARK AS A DUNGEON, which should be treated a little roughly, gets the slow ballad treatment. Indeed, hardly any of the songs are at all done well -- all the life has been arranged right out of them by whoever is supplying Odetta with her musical ideas these days. All in all, this is pretty disappointing stuff and not worth the wax it is printed on.

Complete reviews next month on:
JOHN LEE HOOKER: THE COUNTRY BLUES OF JOHN LEE HOOKER (Riverside 12-838) and THAT'S MY STORY (Riverside 12-321)
LIGHTNING HOPKINS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN BLUES (Tradition 1040) and LIGHTNING HOPKINS (Herald 1012) The Tradition album is an outstanding blues documentary of a great blues man.

THE COUNTRY BLUES: (RBF 1) Recording
THE COUNTRY BLUES: (Rinehart) Book

Samuel B. Charters, author and editor of this record-book set, has started something which will probably keep folk fans arguing for some time to come. His book, the result of numerous trips and much research through the South, is the first study of the Blues as a separate field. His book begins where other books leave off after a chapter on Leadbelly. (In fact, the only reference to Lead is in error -- he did NOT appear in the SPIRITUALS TO SWING concert in 1938.)

The book is accurate in other areas, however, and is written as a history of blues as sung and lived by the old blues artists. I especially like his treatment of the blues as a way of life -- as opposed to the academic studies of this "folk art." Folk art it certainly is, but the blues men weren't singing it as such -- to the old blues singers, the blues were communication; a way of letting people know how they felt, rather than as a conscious "art".

Fappily enough, the book does not go into a lengthy discourse on the history of the Negro in Africa, etc. It does go into the lives and times of many of the fabled singers of America -- Blind Lemon Jefferson, Sleepy John Estes, LeRoy Carr, Blind Willie Johnson, Big Bill Broonzy, Robert Johnson,

and many others not so well known.

The style is readable and the subject well covered -- yet, perhaps because the field is so fascinating, the book leaves you stimulated and wanting more. And this is good, for the more men want; the more they will find. Despite the differences of opinion many will find here (why leave out John Lee Hooker just because he's "uneven"?) this work is rewarding reading.

The companion LP is a collection of old blues "items" -- many of which are now invaluable. For here is Blind Lemon; and the Memphis Jug Band; Washboard Sam; and other legendary figures. The fidelity is surprisingly good, considering the sides have been mastered from ancient, sometimes scratched 78's.

There are sides here for both the collector and the less rabid listener. One cut, FIXING TO DIE by Bukka White, is the greatest knife guitar and singing since Willie Johnson's DARK WAS THE NIGHT. White has a tremendous drive and vitality that makes you wonder why his work isn't more generally known. And the legendary Robert Johnson has a brooding PREACHING BLUES that is fine. Listen especially to the last verse of Lonnie Johnson's CARELESS LOVE. The lyrics here, rarely heard, reflect the most basic bitterness of the blues.

Record, Book, and Film Sales is offering the book and the LP in a package offer -- intelligent merchandising, for the two belong together. The set is a must-buy for

blues enthusiasts. It may not be the last word, but at last somebody has started the ball rolling. Congratulations to Mr. Charters -- he has the blues historians off to a good start. (Reviewer: David Glover)

PETE SEEGER: SONG AND PLAY TIME
(Folkways 7526)

Once again Pete Seeger gives ample evidence that when it comes to LP's for children (or for just about anybody, for that matter), he is awfully hard to beat. He doesn't sing down to them, he doesn't play it coy or cute, he doesn't sing songs that really aren't kids' songs -- and he DOES sing the songs simply and well and in a way that it would be fun for all to listen to or join in. If children like this album half as much as I do, they should have a lot of fun with it. My own favorites are LET US COME IN, RED BIRD, and SHE'LL BE COMING AROUND THE MOUNTAIN. Listed as a participation record for ages 3-8, this LP should be a welcome addition for kids or anyone else who is naive or innocent-at-heart enough to enjoy it, as well as Pete Seeger followers everywhere. Give SOON AS WE COOK SWEET POTATOES a spin: it's as pretty a lullaby as you'll hear anywhere.

TEXT MONTH: A NEW PETE SEEGER LP: THE
MILKSHAKE DESIGN. Pete sings traditional
and contemporary songs. Folkways 2454.

THE KINGSTON TRIO: SOLD OUT
(Capitol 1352)
THE SKIFFLERS: FOLK SONGS
(Perfect 12015)
THE COACHMEN: SUBWAYS OF BOSTON
(Hi Fi 420)

SOLD OUT, it seems to me, would be a far better-fitting title for the Skifflers' new LP than for the Kingston Trio's. One knows what to expect from Guard, Shane, and Reynolds -- but no one would figure Hally Wood to be part of what is as sickeningly commercial and dishonest a folk group as I have ever heard (with the possible exception of the Limelifters or the Coachmen). Miss Wood is one-fourth of what is probably one of Milt Okun's worst ideas (and that would take some doing since he's got a million of 'em): Okun himself, Lee Charles (who is Leon Bibb), and Libby Knight are the other three-fourths. Some of the discoveries they've made about folk music will dazzle you. It seems (according to Hally Wood's liner notes) that Lee Charles remembered from somewhere in his folk past only a small part of that rare and seldom heard folksong, MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE. Possibly he discovered an old Pete Seeger record in his attic or something? Anyway, his memory must have gotten a little clouded because MICHAEL comes out sounding like a sort of Johnny Appleseed of the Erie Canal. Or didn't you know that

this song was the story of a riverboat and a man who sang all over this land? I really admire scholarship and it's good to hear the old songs sung the way they are supposed to be -- we are certainly lucky that Lee Charles was able to piece together something out of that old refrain. And also, since we don't know the game, what sense does it make to sing JENNIE JENKINS right? Especially when you can get the copy-right on it this way. Not that the group isn't ethic or anything -- they sing STEW-BALL "exactly as it was collected from Frison Farm No. 1 in Sugarland, Texas, in 1941" -- complete with orchestral background, drums, banjos, guitars, etc. Other songs they've "improved" are Miss Wood's own sterling performances on Stinson of COME AND GO WITH ME TO THAT LAND and CRAWDAD SONG -- it seems they weren't quite right then. The only reason for taking up so much space with this junk is that it is sad to see Hally Wood's ship go down so low. She still sounds as good as ever and I hope Folkways or some other company will record her doing folk songs as they should be done. Hally Wood is one of the best we have. As far as the rest of the group is concerned, I don't care if I ever hear them again.

The Kingston Trio: 8-12 mature, 12-16 good of type, adults no.

The Coachmen: No.

CARAVAN

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magazine
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folk music



Edited by
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THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

JIMMIE DRIFTWOOD: THE WESTWARD MOVEMENT
(RCA-Victor 2171)

I have the feeling that Jimmie Driftwood would be a whole lot of fun in concert or just to sit around and listen to him play, but on this album most of the fun and freshness has been removed by Chet Atkins' formalized production, country-western electronics, echo-chamber whistling, and a pop-music beat. They are trying to make him sound like his imitators: Johnny Horton and that rummy lot. Jimmie was a whole lot better in the old days on his first Victor album. JORDAN AM. A HARD ROAD TO TRAVEL is about the best thing on this LP. Driftwood also appears with Bing Crosby and Rosemary Clooney on a Victor album called HOW THE WEST WAS WON (6070). It wasn't won by Bing Crosby.

BROCK PETERS AT THE VILLAGE GATE
(United Artists 3062)

Like the first Peters LP, this one contains a rather unpleasant mash of show tunes, folk and pseudo-folk songs done in what seems to be a style that reflects modern jazz, the Actor's Studio, and Paul Robeson. I don't see how any folk fan could like it.

LEON BIBB: TOL' MY CAPTAIN
(Vanguard 9058)

HARRY BELAFONTE: SWING DAT HAMMER
(RCA Victor 2194)

If you sent your child to a summer camp last year, perhaps you made a mistake. Maybe this year you should send him down on the chain gang. They have all kinds of facilities: orchestras and choruses by the hundreds, Harry Belafonte, Milt Okun, Bob DeCormier, Leon Bibb, Freddy Hellerman, and guitarists and arrangers too numerous to mention; all are there. What about that mean ol' captain? Oh, he isn't so bad. Indeed, Messrs. Belafonte and Bibb and their cast of thousands make the chain gang seem like a pretty nice place: all the boys sit around at the end of the day reading dialogue credited to Lee Hays while electronic rain murmurs on the bunkhouse roof and Harry Belafonte philosophizes about beans and chuckles knowingly to himself. Or Leon Bibb talks to Shorty and drives spikes when he feels like it. Both records feature all sorts of wild sound effects — hammers swinging, spikes being driven, whips, grunts, groans, close-harmony yells — when Vanguard finished the Bibb LP, one would imagine that Belafonte moved right in and utilized the phony sounds. None of the terrible suffering, the nobility, or the feel of the real thing is contained in either one of these records. Negro chain-gang music is one of

the most moving things in the world and there are many fine LP's available of the real thing -- the commercial and Archive documentaries of Lomax. For heaven's sake, buy one of them and not this incredible pap by Bibb and Belaphoney.

FOLKSONG FESTIVAL AT EXODUS (Skylark 1002)

The 7 young singers presented on this record have been semi-professionally performing at the Exodus Gallery Bar in Denver in recent months. The recording is apparently intended to introduce them to a wider audience. Sharing the record are the Harlin Trio, Dave Wood, George Downing, Walt Conley, and Judy Collins. Their common approach to folksinging may or may not be typical of Far Western youngsters; but it is definitely one of sophistication -- with the emphasis on a smooth harmonic sound and middle-class humor. I must except Miss Collins from this generalization, for she is markedly more sensitive than the rest. Her *TWA SISTERS*, the best cut on the album, demonstrates her understanding of our inherited British ballads, as well as her skill in the proper dramatic use of voice and instrument. However, if there is no joy or innocence discernable here, neither is there any crass vulgarization or rewritten traditional material -- always an encouraging sign. The record can be obtained by writing the Exodus in Denver.

SONGS OF BREZILA (Tradition 1027)

For those who have been frightened away from many foreign-language folk recordings by the usual pompous orchestra and chorus treatment, this record will be a real treat. The arrangements are as clean and free as the songs themselves are. Sung by Theodore Alvizos (a lyric tenor who is, I think, as good an international balladeer as any better known singer of this genre) to his own guitar accompaniment, the songs cover a variety of styles; from recent compositions in the classic vein to ancient song-myths containing a marked Middle Eastern influence. The melodic range and spirit of these songs are the hallmark of the song of a mountain folk -- a characteristic many Americans are responsive to. We are fortunate that Mr. Alvizos has used his talents to widen the American folksong horizon in a manner so broad and enjoyable. Musicians may wish to note that Rolf Cahn, on second guitar, contributes some excellent classic accompaniments.

The special big contest to discover the largest number of grammatical mistakes in LSR #1 has been won by reader Sidney Grunch, of Wahoo, Nebraska. Sidney sent in 382, and wins Grand first prize -- an Edison 15 of Rudy Vallee singing *DARDANELLA*.

SONGS AND FUN WITH THE BABYSITTERS
(Vanguard 9053)

Alas, the sequel is never as good as the original (in this case, the first Babysitter's LP -- Vanguard 9042). Not that there's not fun to be had in this one too -- try DID YOU EVER HEAR or GY-DE-DOW, for example. But the ideas seem to run thinner here and some of the effects seem forced, whereas the first album was one big joy from beginning to end: a wild and exuberant conglomeration of babies, toy pianos, slide whistles, drums, spoons, and anything else around that added up to the most delightful and the best children's record I've ever heard. This one doesn't quite make it. But, by all means, give the first one a try if you already haven't.

PAUL ROBESON: ENCORE ROBESON (Monitor 581)
RICHARD DYER-BENNET: Vol. 2 (Dyer-Bennet 8)

Both men have their followings and nothing said here would have any effect on either the pro or con sides involved. Robeson is accompanied by Alan Booth on the piano, while R.D.B. accompanies himself on classical guitar. Neither man seems valid as a folksinger and I don't like either one in this context. Those who prefer concert-singers do, however, and these albums are intended for such fans.



THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW is published each month in Minneapolis, Minnesota; and edited by Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake. Staff members: Doris Gehris, Dave Glover, and Doris Nelson.

FURRY LEWIS: (Folkways 3823)

The active Samuel Charters has edited this album of country blues by a singer long (and unjustly) forgotten -- Furry Lewis. Charters "re-discovered" Lewis on a recent visit to Memphis. The depression had ended Lewis' recording until Charters located him working for the city of Memphis. Charters rented a guitar and spent an afternoon taping Furry doing his repertoire and talking of his early career in medicine shows, recordings, and the Gus Cannon jug groups. Lewis does EAST ST. LOUIS BLUES and other songs; and does some fine Mississippi-style "bottle neck" guitar work. Furry can still make those steel strings really sing. Blues students will appreciate the discography of Lewis (through 1929) included in the notes by Charters.

ATTENTION! The original ALMANAC SINGERS can be heard on the Commodore LP 3002 entitled SOD BUSTER BALLADS AND DEEP SEA CHANTIES. This is priceless vintage folk music, remastered from pre-war 78's, and featuring Woody Guthrie in fine voice (and being helped out by a couple of youngsters named Hays and Seeger). Unqualifiedly recommended. \$4.98 sent. to Commodore Records at 299 Nepperhan Ave., Yonkers 2, N.Y. will bring you some wonderful listening.

ED McCURDY with Ralph Bellamy:
SONGS AND STORIES OF THE CIVIL WAR
(RCA-Victor LBY-1032 Bluebird Series)

This LP is a children's record of the Civil War -- told in story by Bellamy and in song by McCurdy. It is very well done and McCurdy sings eight songs that include TENTING ON THE OLD CAMP GROUNDS, MARYLAND MY MARYLAND, and I WISH I WAS IN DIXIE; in his broadest manner. The \$1.98 price makes it worth while.

ROBIN CHRISTENSON: YOU CAN SING IT YOURSELF
(Folkways 7624)

This is a campsong album with kids from summer camp singing under the leadership of banjo-playing Robin Christenson. It is an excellent record of its type, but the type may have quite a limited appeal to most folk listeners. There is one band which should be heard: a song called ANGEL BAND in which the kids create a wild clanging and banging while counting off the angels -- it's lots of fun. Notes are unbelievably complete, and the album should be a big help to anyone who works a great deal with children.

us in pleading with Jac to make this treasure available to us. Please, Jac, your profits have been made on the Limelitters and Oscar Brand -- now do something constructive ... King records has released an album of J. E. MAINER'S MOUNTAINEERS -- priceless old-time country music strictly for aficionados. The same label carries two albums by Grandpa Jones, who is out of Uncle Dave Macon by way of Nashville -- a lot of fun ... Upcoming on Folkways: SONGS OF TWO REBELLIONS with the unbeatable ballad combination of Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger ... Our thanks to Oscar Brand for plugging the LSR on his WNYC radio show. Oscar's letter further states: "I don't agree with some of the things written, especially in your damning the EVERY INCH A SAILOR album for its lewdness. After all the work I had cleaning the songs up, it seems unfair. But I did appreciate the parenthetical 'Don't let these wretched numbers sour you on Oscar Brand' in reference to the Town Hall album. Oh, yes, I wrote WHEN I FIRST CAME TO THIS LAND (!!!!! Editors) out of my own head, and the Limelitters rewrite doesn't bother me too much. They sing it as a "pop" song"... Oscar now has an Elektra album of Marine Songs which we won't even bother to damn ... Our editorial hearts were recently

warmed by receiving Malvina Reynold's letter containing an original song dedicated to the LSR and the following words: "Dear Guys: Enclosed is my check for \$5.00 for a year's sub to the Review. For the rest, please send me some copies of the recent issue that had a review of my album ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM. Pete Seeger read me the review over the phone yesterday and it had me on Cloud 7. It had been a bad day, when I was wondering, as I often do, if it was All Worth While. But in the same day I got a fan letter from Charles Schultz (PEANUTS), and your review. So what if there is no word yet in Variety or the San Francisco Chronicle? The people who count, namely Charlie Brown and THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW, and the little girl in L. A. who gets dressed up in her play clothes, takes her dolly on her lap and rocks vigorously in her rocking chair while her Mother "plays Malvina" on the tape recorder, by request -- like my stuff, so all is well (not to mention Pete and a few other rare and right people). Best wishes for the success of your journal. Yours, Malvina." Many thanks to Mrs. Reynolds ... Be sure to catch Alan Lomax's stirring and informative article, SAGA OF A BALLAD HUNTER, in the May issue of HI FI and STEREO REVIEW. The last page is a persuasive plea for sanity in our

dehumanized era that should be read by everybody ... Happy Day for Joan Baez Fans!!! Our Girl can be heard on FOLK-SINGERS 'ROUND HARVARD SQUARE (Veritas 1) along with Bill Wood and Ted Alevizos (see Ted's review, this issue) ... Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry have two new issues Fantasy 3296 and Prestige Bluesville 1002 ... Doris Gehrls gets \$3.00 an hour working for the LSR ... A friend of ours, Willard Johnson, on being asked for his opinion of the Limeliter and Glen Yarbrough, commented "he (Yarbrough) sounds like a male Judy Garland" ... According to England's RECORD AND SHOW MIRROR, Pete Seeger, Brownie McGhee and Sonny Terry, Woody Guthrie, Jack Elliott, and Jesse Fuller are all due to tour England in the next few months ... Ah, to be in England now that Guthrie's there ... Topic records of England has released an album called SONGS AGAINST THE BOMB (Topic 12001) and will release more topical albums in future months. This LP features Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger, Jack Elliott, Fred and Betty Dallas, and others. Jack, Peggy, and Ewan sing together on one band called BROTHER, WON'T YOU JOIN IN THE LINE? How about it? ... If you haven't already done so, be sure to read the excellent article on the MIDNIGHT SPECIAL in the newest CARAVAN. It is one of the finest articles on folk music we have ever read ... See you next month.

CURRENT AND CHOICE

JEAN RITCHIE, OSCAR BRAND, DAVE SEAR AT TOWN HALL (Folkways 2428)

Oscar and Dave are only fair, but Jean Ritchie is Jean Ritchie.

JEAN RITCHIE FIELD TRIP (Collector Limited Edition 1201) Available from Jean Ritchie, 7a Locust Avenue, Port Washington, New York. \$5.15.

Valid scholarship and entertaining listening. One of the very best.

PETE SEEGER: FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (Folkways 7532)

Pete talking, singing -- and half a kid's concert. Not only for young people.

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: SONGS FROM THE DEPRESSION (Folkways 5264)

The third great album in a row by America's finest folk group -- John Cohen, Mike Seeger, Tom Paley.

MALVINA REYNOLDS: ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM (Folkways 2524)

The only topical songwriter now writing who has left the "folk" in topical folksong.

HOOTENANNY AT CARNEGIE HALL, with Pete and Mike Seeger, Hally Wood, Gary Davis, others. (Folkways 2512)

Pete and Hally at their very best.

LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

3220 Park Avenue South
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'THE ONLY MONTHLY IN THE
FOLK MUSIC FIELD'



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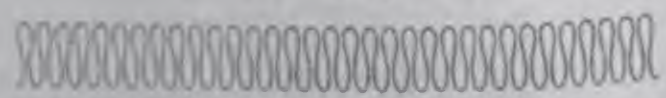
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THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

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POETRY ROOM

On our cover this month is Lightning Hopkins, one of America's finest blues artists. He can be heard on Tradition 1035 and 1040, Folkways 3822, Time 70004, Score 4022, and Herald 1012. Cover drawing is by Jon Pankake.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

EDITOR'S COLUMN

BY PAUL NELSON & JON PANKAKE

Since some of our records have been coming in very slowly, we won't be able to run our analysis of the Stinson line this month. We promise faithfully to include it in next month's big issue ... Riverside has failed to send us the two John Lee Hooker albums in time for a review too. Dave Glover will do them both in LSR #4 ... Wedgely Todd has been thrilling people recently at the Exodus Club. Several recording companies are interested in the fancy banjo-picker with the easy grin ... Josh White was in town this week but we couldn't get fired up enough to go see him. We heard he sang SCARLET RIBBONS and SUMMERTIME ...

The Library of Congress has issued three new releases and will send order blanks on request. The albums released are Folk Music of Wisconsin, Ballads of Michigan Lumberjacks, and Ballads Traditional of the U.S.A. Order blanks and catalogs (at 25¢ each) may be obtained by writing Recording Laboratory, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D.C.

... There should be a new Weavers LP out on Vanguard any day now: Carnegie Hall, Volume Two ... Atco has gotten into the folk field by releasing an LP called INTRODUCING THE FABULOUS NINA & FREDERICK. They are Scandanavian folk duo that sound polished and sophisticated enough to be on Elektra ... Partially due to LSR, Twin Cities radio station KEVE is now playing Peggy Seeger, Guy Carawan, and the Seeger Family. We suggest you give a listen (1440 on your dial) and if you want to hear more of the same, by all means, drop them a card ... Oscar Brand has a new one on Elektra: Volume Two of Air Force Songs, pretty much the same as his other Service albums ... Prestige Records has just started what it calls its Prestige International Series. The first release is SPERO SPYROS AND HIS MODERN GRECIAN ENSEMBLE (13001). If any of you want further information on the series, write to Prestige International, 203 So. Washington Ave., Bergenfield, New Jersey.

... The new Folkways catalogs are out.

They feature all the new releases plus the old numbers, information about the songs, and many critics' comments. Write for one ... Every label on God's earth seems to have a folk group now. Some new ones: The Cumberland 3 on Roulette, the Ivy League Trio (sic) on Coral, the Steeltown Trio on Jini, the Balladeers on Del-Fi, and literally hundreds more ... Those readers who received postcards addressed to LSR in this issue are asked to take part in the first LSR audience-response test! Tell us what you think of us ... Next issue will contain a tribute to Woody Guthrie featuring reviews and comments on his Stinson work by a number of people plus some original art work ... Movie Dept.: Doesn't Judy Holliday in THE BELLS ARE RINGING sound a lot like Malvina Reynolds when she's singing? ... Try Kazan's WILD RIVER for a fine folk movie ... There is a Caedmon 10" LP (in their Children's Series) that you may not know about. It features, among others, Pete Seeger and Jean Ritchie singing kids' songs ... There are all sorts of new records that we've heard about but haven't yet seen. A partial list: Paul Clayton's HOMEMADE SONGS AND BALLADS on Monument 4001, Gene and Bill Bonyun's AMERICAN REVOLUTION THROUGH ITS SONGS AND DANCES on Heirloom 502, FOLK DANCE! on Monitor 900, Brother John Sellers' BAPTIST SHOUTS, SPIRITUALS, AND HYMNS on Monitor 335, A new Burl Ives on

United Artists, and the Goldenaires' SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN SONGS on Vox 26120... Here are some we've seen but would rather forget: RUSTY RICHARDS SINGS CONTEMPORARY AND TRADITIONAL AMERICAN FOLK SONGS on Shasta 504, Pete Brady on ABC, the Balladeers' ALIVE-O on Del-Fi 1204, Danny Dill's FOLKSONGS OF THE WILD WEST on MGM 3819, and RONNIE HAWKINS SINGS FOLKSONGS on Roulette. Nothing... Ted Alevizos writes that Joan Baez' new record (with Ted and Bill Wood) on Veritas can be obtained by writing Veritas Records, 585 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass., ... Traditon Records will release an album of Cowboy Songs by Ed McCurdy, and Folkways has upcoming an LP of Kid's Songs and Stories, Volume Two, by Ed ... Don't believe the rumors that have been circulating for years saying that the Carter Family was killed in an auto accident. The Carters have recently reformed and are recording on LP and singles for Acme Records. A. P. and Sarah are now accompanied by their children, Joe and Jeanette, on guitars -- and Carter aficionados say the famous Carter sound is as good as ever! ... That's about all for now. Keep those letters and subscriptions pouring in. Subscriptions are available to the LSR by sending \$3.00 for 12 issues to Paul Nelson, 3220 Park Ave. So., Mpls., Minnesota. And, by all means, do subscribe ... See you next month.

MEMPHIS SLIM AND THE REAL HONKY TONK:
PIANO SOLOS WITH VCCAL (Folkways 3535)

"After midnight, the blues joints came alive. The crowd was raucous, noisy, and high on hooch -- it took a good piano player to hold his own . . ."

Memphis Slim could certainly be that piano player for he is one of the best I have ever heard: he is one of the major blues artists in America. This album is designed to be a sort of Volume Two to Slim's first album for Folkways -- MEMPHIS SLIM AND THE REAL BOOGIE WOOGIE (Folkways 3524). The keynote in both LP's is the word REAL for this indeed is the real thing done by a real artist who understands and loves these songs and is able to perform them superbly. There is hardly such a thing as a best cut here for all the songs are uniformly fine. Both of these Folkways albums are highly recommended: you will be confronted with the real thing, which doesn't happen very often in the honky tonk and boogie woogie field.

MICHEL LARUE: SONGS OF THE AMERICAN
NEGRO SLAVES (Folkways 5252)

This is a very disappointing album coming from Folkways. From Moses Asch, one expects authenticity and the feeling of the real thing. Yet, there is none

of that in this LP. Michel LaRue sounds like a cross between Harry Belafonte and Leon Bibb: he has that cultured, professionally-trained Actorish diction that removes all the nobility and poignancy from these powerful songs and turns them into what strongly resembles the Art-type folk song. The notes for this album are very good, and I would suggest you buy a copy of them and forget the record completely.

JIMMIE RODGERS: MY ROUGH AND ROWDY WAYS
(RCA-Victor 2112)

Yes, Virginia, there was an original Jimmie Rodgers. He was known as the Blue Yodeler, and, unlike his vapid contemporary namesake, he was a great performer whose followers haven't forgotten him in the 27 years since his death. This album, the third collection of Rodgers' old single cuts re-released by Victor, spans not only the Yodeler's entire career (1927-1933), but his remarkable range as a singer. MISSISSIPPI MOON and CAROLINA SUNSHINE GIRL are still as cornball as when new, but MULESKINNER BLUES and SOUTHERN CANNONBALL (a version of DANVILLE GIRL) aptly demonstrate Rodgers' true folk roots -- as do LONG TALL MAMA BLUES and TRAVELLIN' BLUES his knowledge of blues and blues-oriented material. Woody Guthrie fans will enjoy, no doubt,

conjecturing on the influence of Rodgers' singing style and Woody's style (the yodel in MULESKINNER BLUES is a starting point). To cap it all off, there is a rare side, STANDING ON THE CORNER, of Rodgers singing (and excellently) with a Dixieland band containing Louis Armstrong and Earl Hines as sidemen. Rodgers was, of course, essentially a country-western commercial singer, and the sounds heard on this record are hardly ethnic -- but, unless one is a person whose hair stands on end at the merest sound of country-western music, Rodgers' work will be of interest. And lest he be dismissed as only a radio singer who has no part in the folk process -- let us remind you that such works as the Brown collection of North Carolina folk songs contain T FOR TEXAS and other Rodgers-composed songs collected unwittingly as pure folk material from folk informants. Let us hope the Victor people will continue to put out more Jimmie Rodgers' records, and that they, as well as the other record companies, will put out on LP form similar collector's items by Woody Guthrie, Uncle Dave Macon, the Carter Family, etc. Jimmie Rodgers has proved that a large market exists for this type of LP.

Be sure to read Bob Shelton's story on Moses Asch and Folkways Records in the June issue of High Fidelity magazine.

THE RURAL BLUES. Edited by Sam Charters. (RBF 202)

In my review last month of Sam Charters' first COUNTRY BLUES LP, I said something about it not being the last word -- it seems as though Charters may have the last word: Record, Book, and Film Sales (121 West 47th Street, New York, New York) have just released a two-LP set, THE RURAL BLUES, compiled and edited by Charters.

There are 43 cuts in the album from Charters' own collection and from other early blues recordings. The credits read like a Who's Who of Blues -- Robert Johnson, Furry Lewis, Sleepy John Estes, Blind Boy Fuller, Lightning Hopkins, Blind Willie Johnson, Leroy Carr, Arthur Crudup, and too many more to mention. However, there's a small catch -- most of the cuts are fragments, varying in length from 30 seconds to almost three minutes. But, since Charters says in the notes that this material is intended as a study of the sources of rural blues, you can't really complain.

Because, as a study, it is comprehensive, thorough, and complete. The notes (by Charters himself) trace a rough history of the Country Blues as well as going into the many styles and effects that the blues

artists use. The LP's are set up as examples of various widely differing styles included in the general classification of Country Blues. There are three main divisions -- Vocal Styles, Vocal Ornamentation, and Instrumental. Under each heading are illustrative examples. For instance, in the second group, Blind Willie Johnson's TAKE YOUR BURDEN TO THE LORD is used as a sample of a "false bass" vocal style.

I can't help wondering if perhaps this whole idea wasn't just an excuse for issuing blues classics -- not criticism -- Charters is a man who has a sincere interest in the blues and studies and records them, commercial or not. It's just that I'll bet he had fun putting this album together. There are things here that many a blues collector would give his right arm to get hold of.

This set would make an excellent introduction to blues for those who are interested in hearing the roots of many modern day blues singers such as Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, and Howling Wolf. And here's a wild idea -- perhaps this could serve as a sampler for people who like blues but aren't familiar enough with them to know who is good.

Some highlights: the mood set by Furry Lewis on YOU CAN LEAVE BABY ... THOUSAND WOMAN BLUES by Blind Boy Fuller ... the

lyrics on IF I GET LUCKY by Arthur Crudup, which Elvis Presley recorded as THAT'S ALL RIGHT ... MILK COW BLUES by Kokomo Arnold which Presley also recorded ... the intense and brooding STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS by Robert Johnson ... fine knife guitar work on Blind Willie's NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE ... the driving rhythm of BUKKA'S JITTERBUG SWING ... the first recorded country blues -- AIRY MAN BLUES with PaPa Charlie Jackson on banjo ... the country piano (!) of Skip James ... Leroy Carr's recording of HOW LONG HOW LONG BLUES in its entirety ... Sonny Terry with Blind Boy Fuller on the swinging HARMONICA STOMP ... Frank Stokes' blues violin on SHINEY TOWN BLUES ... Virgil Perkins' kazoo on TROUBLE IN MIND -- with Samuel B. Charters accompanying on 12-string guitar ... Ham Gravy (Washboard Sam) on MAMA DON'T LOV' IT with Big Bill on guitar ... and many, many others.

Major complaint: the fades right in the middle of some of my favorite people's cuts. Also, with just one exception, the Lightning Hopkins selections are all taken from his Folkways LP. I know that there are many others in existence -- in fact, I have some. So why use readily available sides? In general, though, this record is worth every cent of its price tag. The fidelity is good, even on the sides that go way back. Blues students couldn't buy

a much better album and collectors will be able to get at least a piece of some of these hard-to-find items. At any event, I'm glad I got this set.

Charters makes a point in the notes that I think is worth repeating --

"Since the Second World War, a number of older blues singers have been performing as concert artists for an intellectual white audience that has usually confused the style with American folk music. The results have been the development of a rather pretentious 'folk blues' style ... "

I'm glad somebody has finally said it -- blues is NOT folk music. Blues is blues and folk is folk.

It's good to see good blues being re-issued and interest growing in it.

What's next, Mr. Charters?

(Reviewer: Dave Glover)

LIGHTNING HOPKINS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN BLUES
(Tradition 1040) See our cover.

It seems that Lightning Hopkins has been "re-discovered" lately. Practically every company that has old singles in their files has been issuing LP's -- Score has some of his early things that were originally on Alladin, Time has an LP of old cuts from Shad and Sittin' In, and Herald has put together an LP of his

singles from that label.

Not all of Lightning's LP's are old cuts -- Sam Charters has recorded him for Folkways, and Mack McCormick has two LP's of his out on the Tradition label.

The latest, AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN BLUES, is an "idea" album. McCormick, taking note of the intensely personal nature of most of Lightning's songs, put together what he calls "vignettes of Lightning's life."

Autobiography or not -- it really doesn't matter -- the main thing is that here are twelve cuts by Lightning, one of the best surviving country blues singers. This is not a "cover" album with different versions of the same songs available on other LP's -- most of these have previously not appeared in album form. Unlike the other Tradition album, this has been well-recorded, Lightning's guitar is in tune, his voice is superb, and the songs are both well-chosen and well-done. None of the corny folksiness of the other LP -- this one is the real blues.

About one-third of the cuts are traditional blues which Lightning has adapted to suit his style. Especially interesting is his version of WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN. Another third of the cuts are songs that have become a regular part of Lightning's repertoire -- SO LONG BABY, SHORT-HAIRED WOMAN, etc.

The last third were, according to McCormick, improvised on the spot and forgotten almost as soon as they were sung.

These cuts show Lightning's tremendous ability to create the true, sad poetry of the blues in the night. He is one of the most communicative blues singers I've heard. Listen to IN THE EVENING WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN. It captures the loneliness of a man sitting under a tree in a southern field at twilight. Lightning's mixed narrative-and-singing style along with his stinging blues guitar make almost every song he tackles an experience. He can take such a tired old blues as TROUBLE IN MIND and make it sound new and vital. His singing voice, the most expressive that I've heard, is shown off to good advantage in MAMA AND PAPA HOPKINS.

"I wonder why my mama don't love my papa no more," sings Lightning, and right away you're drawn into the sad picture of a little boy caught between fighting parents.

The only disappointment on the album is SANTA FE BLUES. Those who have heard the RPM single will miss the tight unity and poignancy that made the original such a tremendous thing.

With this renewed interest, Lightning is being heard more and more. He even had

a full-page story in one of the Houston papers, and lately he has been giving concerts. It will be interesting to see what all this fame will do to this lonely man who has been broke and ignored for much too long. Will he go the Josh White route? I doubt it -- for Lightning was born with the blues in him, and, to use his own words, "If it's in you it's got to come out." Listen to this LP and hear some real blues that were performed on street corners first, and in the concert hall later. This is the vital stuff that makes some of Big Bill's later recordings look pretty pale by comparison. Lightning Hopkins -- blues artist. Listen and see.

EWAN MacCOLL: SONGS OF TWO REBELLIONS
(Folkways 8756)

The fifteen Jacobite songs on this album are about equally divided between rousing martial airs and softer love-and-farewell ballads -- but MacColl has erected an unnecessary boundary between the two types of songs by singing each type in a distinct and separate style and voice. I must say that the softer and gayer tunes come off much the better for MacColl uses here a natural and intimate ballad style that has no peers. The traditional Scotch parting song, WILL YE NO COME BACK AGAIN, is one of

the best airs MacColl has recorded anywhere -- dignified, touching, nostalgic. And CHARLIE HE'S MY DARLING, playfully jibing the amorous exploits of the Young Pretender, is as charmingly sly and tuneful a little song as one could desire. However, MacColl loses his charm and warmth when he adopts a throaty, booming baritone and sharper phrasing for YE JACOBITES BY NAME, THE HAUGHS OF CROMDALE, and similar spirited songs. It is no longer MacColl the balladeer we hear on these numbers, but rather an alien and cold concert singer. The contributions of Peggy Seeger -- banjo, guitar, and mandolin accompaniments that are always impeccably correct yet sensitive, and occasional vocal support that is so delightful one wishes it had been used on more numbers -- are of inestimable value to the interest generated by the album.

THE SEAFARERS CHORUS: WE SING OF THE SEA
(Elektra 182)

Sea songs naturally lend themselves to choral treatment and the Seafarers do a better job than most in providing the harmonies and shouting choruses that the songs beg for. Conductor Milt Okun has wisely used simple accompaniment

(banjo, guitar, concertina, etc.) and tasteful arrangements, and the results are a good record which will please fans of chorale work who find the Luboff style a bit too lush. Especially pleasing are Ned Wright's solo of AMELIA, WHERE YA BOUND TO and the lead-voice work of baritone Eugene Brice.

THE RAUNCH HANDS: PICKIN' AND SINGIN'
(Epic 3698)

Sounds awful, doesn't it? Another damn group lousing up folk songs? The Raunch Hands? Who needs them?

Well, you're partially right, but things aren't quite that bad. The one thing that this group has that no other group has had (are you listening, Limelickers?) is a subtle and serviceable sense of humor. This sense of humor is used to good avail generally throughout the record, especially on such numbers as HILLBILLY SPECTACULAR and A STUDY OF ROCK AND ROLL. When the group is singing straight folksongs, they sound pretty much like any other group and sing what must be by now the standard group folksongs to sing in your first album: WRECK OF THE JOHN B, BANUA, SANTY ANNO, etc. There are some tasteless and banal numbers too, done a la Shane, Guard, and Reynolds: ZOMBIE JAMBOREE is one that comes to mind, and there are others. All in all,

the whole LP reeks of Collegiate humor, for the Raunch Hands are all Harvard Boys, and is sort of folk music done slickly and musically well: a non-Ethnic approach with a belt on the back, but nonetheless harmless, wildly enthusiastic, and kind of fun in a non-scholarly way. At least they didn't claim they wrote the songs.

PETE SEEGER: THE RAINBOW QUEST
(Folkways 2454)

THE RAINBOW QUEST is clearly an "idea" album, yet neither Pete Seeger nor the liner notes really tell us what the "idea" is. Subtitled PETE SEEGER SINGS TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY FOLKSONGS, the LP seems to be a potpourri of songs and fragments of songs revolving somewhat around the quest for world peace, love, and understanding. Side One is composed of fragments of songs all run together in a row much like Pete is doing in concert now. Yet there is no interspersed comment telling us about the songs or why he is doing it. Side Two is mostly peace songs, some of them written by Pete himself, and others by Peggy Seeger and Ewan MacColl. There are some very nice things in this LP -- HOLD UP YOUR PETTICOATS, THE DOVE, GOLDEN THREAD, SEEK AND YOU SHALL FIND, WHERE

HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE -- yet the traditionalist will probably want to skip it for most of the songs on the LP (except for some of the fragments) are contemporary folksong. Not that there is anything wrong with this. What the album could have used, I think, is an explanation of what it was trying to do, and some of Pete's matchless comment mixed in with the songs. Nonetheless, it's a fine album, and well worth picking up.

EVERYBODY SING! Volumes 1, 2, and 3.
RIVERSIDE WONDERLAND SERIES 1418, 1419,
and 1420. Songs for Cubs, Songs for Juniors, Songs for Seniors.

This is a confusing set of albums for the title is not at all inducive as to what the records really are. In effect, they are far more a sampler-type LP than Sing-Alongs, for they feature bands taken off other Riverside albums and nothing here is on this album alone or not available elsewhere on Riverside. For the serious collector, there is nothing new here. For the less serious folk fan, the \$1.98 price tag might well look pretty inviting for albums featuring such folk artists as Peggy Seeger, Oscar Brand, Bob Gibson, Jean Ritchie, Leon Bibb, Ed McCurdy, Paul Clayton, Cynthia Gooding, Milt Okun,

and Bascom Lamar Lunsford. Riverside will release a fourth album in this series featuring International folk music.

In addition to THE WEAVERS AT CARNEGIE HALL, VOLUME TWO (VRS 9075), Vanguard will release Ernest Bloch's symphony based on American folk music, AMERICA -- AN EPIC RHAPSODY (VRS 1056), conducted by Leopold Stokowski, plus the VAUGHN WILLIAMS FOLK SONG ALBUM (VRS 1055) with Alfred Deller. Release date on all three albums should be any day now.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Gentlemen: First, enclosed find a check for \$3.00 for a 1-year subscription to LSR. I do not know when I have enjoyed myself so much as when reading your fascinating publication.

Contrary to the information in issue #2, I do not have in my possession an unreleased album of Bascom Lamar Lunsford. Elektra has several tracks given to us by Ken Goldstein, which were to have been included in the second album of the OUR SINGING HERITAGE series. This material does not represent Lunsford's best work. Since I was dissatisfied with the whole album, I

canceled its release. Please set the record straight. Very truly yours,
JAC HOLZMAN

Editors' Note: Even some of Lunsford's poorer work would be a far cry better than most of the current recorded folk music both on Elektra or any other label. Let us hope Jac Holzman reconsiders.

S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S/S

Dear Friends: Many thanks for sending me a copy of your first issue. Enclosed find \$3.00. Please put me on your mailing list for the next year.

Although it is difficult for Americans to get records from England, there are a number of extraordinarily good records of American folk music being released in England which are not available here. If you would like to try writing Collet's Music Shop, 80 Gower Street, London, I think they would let you know about the new ones as they come out. That shop incidentally is quite reliable and you can order records from them and expect about a two to three week delivery on almost anything. There is also a small record shop called Dobell's which has what they call a "77 Series." This is of special records which are made up in lots of only 99 pressings. They're well worth knowing about.

In general, congratulations on your magazine. I hope you remember to keep it

about them, and we certainly appreciate getting letters and comments like this.

1. A fair knowledge of the folk field as well as a fair knowledge of the record business and the rudiments of writing, photography, and art are our only qualifications as reviewers. We have been encouraged within the field by several people who seemed to think we were well-qualified to review folk records. You may agree, disagree, disregard, or be amused -- whichever you prefer. We certainly do not claim to be experts.
2. Not all persons, but it certainly helps. No one can sing folksongs like the folk (any folksinger worth his salt will tell you that). If you do not live in that area where the song you are singing comes from, you certainly should know something about the song, what it means to the people of that region, etc., so you don't louse it up completely. It's impossible for most of us to live in the locales of the songs we sing, but it is not impossible to learn about them from books and records and other people. A singer should learn from the real sources; not ignore them.
3. The idea of "arranging a song to

communicate to most people" is a pretty nauseating one to us. This is what the Weavers and the Kingston Trio do. People must come to folk music themselves. You don't change or dilute the music and make it come to them. The real music is there, open to anyone who is willing to come to it and take it in its pure form. Arrangement is not necessary, and, if done, must remain within the folk form (which the Weaver, Kingston Trio, Odetta, etc., do not do). You do not add a pretty girl to a Cezanne painting so it will communicate with more people.

4. Certainly. Who said it wasn't? However, I don't think you're going to find anyone whose "aesthetic values" hold to any norm. Some may have a great aesthetic experience listening to Robeson or Dyer-Bennet; others to hoedown music of Kentucky.
5. Frankly, we don't know too much about it. You've probably heard as much as we have. Certainly many people in the field have been associated with Leftist movements -- that's common knowledge. However, I don't think the great interest in folk music grew out of Communist gatherings. Then again, I suppose it didn't hurt, did it?
6. I refer you to early CARAVAN's or GARDYLOO for this one -- I've read a

couple hundred too many articles on it already. Frankly, I don't care to add to the confusion. You're either a folksinger (good or bad) or not a folksinger to LSR. All the rest seems like a meaningless quibble over words.

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Edith Fowke writes from Toronto (we will print the entire letter next issue):

This is the first time I have written a letter of this kind to a folksong magazine, so I think you may take it as a compliment that your opinions stirred me to express mine. On the whole, I like your approach, and I hope you'll continue to keep on writing just as you are.

A new folk music book: SONGS OF WORK AND FREEDOM by Edith Fowke and Joe Glazer. Available from Labor Education Division, Roosevelt University, 430 So. Michigan Ave., Chicago 5, Illinois. Plastic Bound is \$2.50, Hardbound \$5.00.

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Ted Alevizos writes: I want to thank you for the kind words about my SONGS OF GREECE. Knowing people take time to listen to one's record is gratifying indeed.

Dave Glover writes of Sonny Terry LSR #4.

CURRENT AND CHOICE

MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY.
Collected by John Cohen. (Folkways 2317)

An album that ranks with the Library of Congress field recordings.

THE COUNTRY BLUES. Edited by Sam Charters. (RBF 1)

A compilation of priceless blues collector's items in LP form to go along with Charters' book of the same name.

FURRY LEWIS (Folkways 3823)

A "re-discovered" folk great sings a fine album of blues.
Recorded by Sam Charters.

JEAN RITCHIE, OSCAR BRAND, DAVE SEAR AT TOWN HALL (Folkways 2428)

JEAN RITCHIE FIELD TRIP (Collector Limited Edition 1201)

PETE SEEGER: FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (Folkways 7532)

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: SONGS FROM THE DEPRESSION (Folkways 5264)

MALVINA REYNOLDS: ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM (Folkways 2524)

HOOTENANNY AT CARNEGIE HALL (Folkways 2512)

FOLKWAYS

117 West 46th Street
N. Y. 36, N. Y.



ANOTHER NEW PETE SEEGER ...

FA2454 THE RAINBOW QUEST

Colorado Trail, Spanish is the
Loving Tongue, Texas Gals, We
Pity Our Bosses Five, The
Scabs Crawl In, Open the Door,
Hold Up Your Petticoats, The
Dove, To Everyone in the World,
Oh, Had I a Golden Thread, and
others.

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others.

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no. 4



THE LITTLE SANDY
REVIEW

FOLKWAYS

This month's cover features Guy Carawan, one of our best young folksingers and one of the finest men we've ever met. Guy can be heard in this country on Folkways LP's 3544, 3548, and 3552 and in England on Nixa 19029 (with Peggy Seeger), Topic 10T24, HMV 1174 (again with Peggy Seeger), and several EP's and singles. Guy's newest release (reviewed in this issue) is a Folkways EP with Pete Seeger and others called SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM SONGS.

EDITOR'S COLUMN EDITOR'S COLUMN

BY PAUL NELSON & DON PATLAKE

A lot of excitement was recently generated in the LSR offices when we received a publicity brochure from Vokes Music Publications. It seems the company has unearthed a new recording star -- none other than its president, Cowboy Howard Vokes himself; a singer who "packs power, emotion and much feeling into his singing ..." A condensed life history of the Cowboy is included,

and from which the following quotes are taken: "...When 17 years old, Cowboy was shot with a deer rifle in the right ankle which resulted in spending 6 weeks in the hospital but not wasted time for he wrote over 150 songs and mastered the 'Spanish guitar' during the confinement." As if this incredible talent were not enough of a burden to be borne by one mortal, the Cowboy "...can send goosepimples up and down the back with his singing from the heart. He can sing most any style, and folks have cheered him all over the country.." Yet there is another more human and beneficent side to this great young bundle of talent. For Cowboy Howard Vokes has discovered and started on the road to fame such greats as Rudy Thatcher, Hank King, and the famous Denver Duke & Jefferey Null; and has found time in his crowded schedule to dash off such hits as ATOM BOMB HEART, THANK YOU GRAND OLE OPRY, HANK WILLIAMS ISN'T DEAD, TEARS AT THE GRAND OLE OPRY, GHOST OF A HONKY TONK SLAVE, and his newest big smash on Del-Ray Records, WILLIE ROY THE CRIPPLED BOY. Quoting again from the Vokes story: "Cowboy Howard Vokes has a deep faith in his Maker and loves to help others. He states, 'We're all God's children and if we help one of His, He will surely help us many times over.'" The generous Cowboy graciously sent us a personally autographed photo of Himself -- which occupies a place of honor on our office wall next to our GIVE 'EM HELL sign. Those who wish to

support Cowboy Howard, or who doubt his authenticity, can write him at New Kensington, Pa., c/o Vokes Music. Ask for his complete life story. It should be great ... Record Research has undertaken a monumental project -- a complete listing of blues singles from the mid-forties to date! BLUES RESEARCH #1 can be obtained for 30¢ from Record Research, 131 Hart St., Brooklyn 6, N. Y. We understand that LSR staffer Barry Hansen has some material in it ... Oscar Brand, prolific as ever, has BOAT SONGS AND BOATING AND ALL THAT BILGE on Elektra 183 -- in-group songs for boating fans ... Vanguard news: Joan Baez has been signed into the Vanguard fold. Will they be preposterous enough to gum up this great voice with an orchestra? Also, expect a Ewan MacColl issue -- mastered from Topic cuts which we guarantee are not orchestrated. The 1960 Newport Folk Festival will again be on Vanguard -- 3 or 4 LP's; and the fourth record of the 1959 set should be forthcoming ... Write to Bob and Sidsel Gleason at 182 N. Arlington Avenue, East Orange, New Jersey, and ask for the free WOODY GUTHRIE NEWSLETTER -- news and chatter on the latest doings of Woody and his friends. The LSR "WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY RECORD....?" Dept.: A Frank Hamilton LP? Hally Wood ungimmicked by backing or group? More Ramblin' Jack Elliott? More Malvina Reynolds (perhaps singing

with Pete Seeger)? Now that they are all together again for a while: Pete, Mike, and Peggy Seeger singing en group. Pete doing an album of Guthrie's kids' songs? Or an album of mountain songs with Jean Ritchie? Seattle's Mike Russo -- one of the best blues artists in the country? He sings Leadbelly songs with a 12-string and does a much better job than Fred Gerlach. Carolyn Hester (her hesitant recording debut on Coral doesn't count -- she's come a long way)? Logan English in the foot-stompin' and shoutin' style he excels in? The phenomenal banjo of Smilin' Wedgeley Todd? And how about the Ramblers doing some of those Gid Tanner-Faith Norris duets with Mike Seeger singing Norris' falsetto parts? ... Send 25¢ to Harvey Fink, 903 Oak Street, Watertown, Wisconsin, to get a postcard photo of himself and his guitar ... The Wattle label of Australia has some fascinating issues on singles and LP's featuring A. L. Lloyd, Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger, and John Greenway. Watch LSR for listings and reviews ... We were highly pleased by CARAVAN's review of our publication -- and Billy Faier's definitive definition of FOLKUM. Also by DISC COLLECTOR's "...one of the best of its kind I've seen...reviews folk records...in a way records should be reviewed, regardless of where the chips may fall...well worth

the price." Our thanks ... A good place to do mail-order record buying: JIMMIE SKINNER MUSIC CENTER, 222 E. 5th St., Cincinnati, Ohio. "Largest selection of country, sacred, square dance, etc."

... The Tarriers, with undetermined personnel, have signed with Atlantic ...

Victor 2196, THE WINDJAMMERS, contains songs by the Norwegian group that sang

on the soundtrack to the Cinemiracle film ... Brownie and Sonny have a new

one on World Pacific 1294, BLUES IS A STORY. New on M-G-M this month is

BLOW YE WINDS, sea songs by the Coast Guard Academy Singers. Also, a new

Merle Travis on Capital called WALKIN' THE STRINGS ... Following his farewell

concert in McCosh's Bookstore basement, Wedgeley Todd packed up his ancient

6-string banjo and left town for Chicago and the big-time. Chicagoans will soon

be hearing him play his TWINKLE TWINKLE LITTLE STAR and other favorites in his

fantastic five-finger Bluegrass style. Good luck, Wedgeley, and keep grinning ...

Barbara Dane fans may want her recent (but non-folk) LP: LIVING WITH THE BLUES

(Dot 3177) -- classic blues back by Earl Hines at the piano ... Rock-and-roll

guitarist Duane Eddy ambushes SONGS OF OUR HERITAGE on Jamie 3011 ... The

Kingston Trio's embarrassing attempt to imitate Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger's

JOHNNY LAD apparently wasn't tawdry enough even for them -- the group is now using the song for a 7-Up commercial ...

SINGING THE BLUES (Camden 588) contains, among other reissues, Leadbelly's GOOD MORNING BLUES ... RETURN OF THE WAYFARING STRANGER (Columbia 1459), Burl Ives' newest, has a beautiful cover photo ...

The LSR's staff now includes Reed College's Barry Hansen and Minneapolis folk-scholar Dave Williams. In addition, Winnie Winston

has offered to cover the Asheville Folk Folk Festival for us -- an LSR exclusive.

Izzy Young's retrospective record reviews are so retrospective we haven't seen one

yet -- but we keep hoping. And we keep hoping for ever more subscriptions from

our legions of readers -- how about you? Send us \$3.00 for a solid year of LITTLE

SANDYS (to LSR, 3220 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis, Minnesota) and you, too, will be able to say, "I saw it FIRST in THE LITTLE SANDY."

RECORD REVIEWS

JACK ELLIOTT: RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT IN LONDON (Columbia 33 SX 1166) This is not the American Columbia label. This is an English record.

This is an out-and-out bad record, and for LSR to call a Jack Elliott record bad is rare indeed. It is a commercial LP and a melange of all sorts of songs and

styles ranging from cornball country-western to Andy Griffith bathroom humor (yes, really) to wildly overdone Cowboy folksongs. On almost every number, Jack takes off into the wild blue yonder of oversinging and makes Ed McCurdy at his broadest seem shy and subtle. Jack parodies himself throughout the record, and, although most of the songs claim to be authentic Western folksong, this does not always hold true. A lot of these songs are out-and-out commercial hillbilly Top Forty stuff, and the group that accompanies Jack on several of these songs is sad indeed. I hope Jack gets straightened out and rambles back over to Topic Records to make more good LP's. This one is mostly junk. Songs include I RIDE AN OLD PAINT, DOWN IN THE WILLOW GARDEN, TALKING BLUES, ROCKY MT. BELLE, and JACK O'DIAMONDS, but, I'm afraid, you won't like very many of them.

JEAN THOMAS, THE TRAIPSIN' WOMAN:
AMERICAN FOLK SONG FESTIVAL
(Folkways 2358)

Jean Thomas, a native of Kentucky and authoress of three books on the life and songs of the hill people, presents a sampling from her annual festival in the Cumberlands. Reviewers of Miss Thomas's books have found them overly sentimental - the same may be said for portions of this record. A large part of Side One is de-

voted to the singing of children. These songs are "cute" but are otherwise without interest, being standard and well-known versions of generally familiar songs. The singing of 9-year-old Ruby Dean does show promise of a future Jeanie West.

Of the more mature singers better can be said. The singing of Pleaz W. Mobley, Dora Harmon, and Lula M. Curry as well as the fiddling of Bob Ramey are all worthy of note. Mr. Mobley's PRETTY POLLY, Mrs. Harmon's THE PRODIGAL SON, and Mrs. Curry's THE SQUIRE'S DAUGHTER are especially fine. I regret that TURKEY IN THE STRAW is the only sample we are given of Mr. Ramey's excellent country fiddling. The singing (if not the songs) of Dave Varney is worthy of note. He sounds like Mike Seeger's prototype!

Collectors of folk music should note that the only other available samples of the singing of Mr. Mobley are on Library of Congress recordings.

Poor recording techniques have cut the quality of some of the songs on this record. The notes with the album are not of the usual Folkways high standard. More to the point, poor or misguided taste has permitted over one-third of the lesser-interesting performances to remain along with the highly-interesting and superior two-thirds of the record. Though specific editing responsibilities are not mentioned, I gather

that Miss Thomas must take the blame as well as the praise.

The "adult" two-thirds of this record make it worth adding to any comprehensive collection of Southern Mountain folk music. (Reviewer: Dave Williams)

Editors' Note: We agree with Mr. Williams' review in most cases but would like to mention a song which we feel is worthy of note -- BONNIE GEORGE CAMPBELL, here sung by Mrs. Margaret Caudil Hurst and her little daughter. We think it's the best thing in the album and one of the most beautiful and moving performances of folk music we've heard in a long time.

CHARLEY WALKER, JOHN DUFFEY, AND THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN: COUNTRY SONGS. OLD AND NEW (Folkways 2409)

Were a New Lost City Ramblers-type group to form in the year 1990, the "vintage" records they would be learning their material from could well be those of the Country Gentlemen -- for certainly these boys represent the very best of today's popular-authentic country musicians. Mike Seeger says that they "illustrate one of several directions in which today's Bluegrass may develop" -- but the influences at work on the Gents are far wider than only Bluegrass.

Of course, the group does perform Bluegrass excellently -- the traditional PAUL AND SILAS, ROVING GAMBLER, and DARLING ALALEE are standout numbers -- with the hard, nasal choruses pointing proudly to such forebearers as the Mainer Mountaineers and the Monroe groups. But Eddie Adcock's banjo work reveals a knowledge of jazz progressions and Atkins-Travis guitar work as well as the innovations of Scruggs. To be sure, the sentimental and sacred numbers (recent compositions all) rely on an artificial sentimentality -- not the type which belabors the woes of crippled children to tug the tears -- but a more general and widespread concept created by and for a mass-communication audience of country listeners. Accepting these songs on this basis, A GOOD WOMAN'S LOVE and DRIFTING TO FAR FROM THE SHORE are as moving and as sincere popular country music as I have heard in years. They are sung in a frank and unabashed emotional manner that lacks the cynicism of Nashville's electronic neo-Country-Western "hits" -- and in the pleasing harmonies and phrasing that once made the Sons of the Pioneers back-porch radio favorites. Bluegrass and country fans, collectors of ancient commercial country discs, and NLCR fans will find the Gents absolutely irresistible.

\$3.00 brings you 12 big issues of LSR a year. Back issues of #2 and #3 are still available (only a few left). #1 is sold out.

PETE SEEGER, GUY CARAWAN, AND CHORUS:
SOUTH AFRICAN FREEDOM SONGS
(Folkways EP 601)

Pete would never dream of stepping to his concert mike and singing, say, SENZENINA unannounced and unexplained. Nor would Guy perform WE SHALL OVERCOME to his audiences without first telling them what the song means to Americans struggling for their rights as citizens. Yet, this is what has been done to the four Zulu songs on this EP -- removing them from the ranks of social document and protest (which they are intended to be) and placing them in a cold and removed museum setting. Either Pete or Guy should have introduced the songs with comment on where, why, when, and by whom they are being sung. This would have been worth sacrificing an extra chorus or verse. The record is an admirable project (all royalties go to the American Committee on Africa) -- but one can't relate the songs to the album photos of the Sharpville massacres. Needless to say, the album is musically excellent -- spirited singing by great folk talents -- but it just doesn't work in the way it was intended to. In case any of you are wondering what a Folkways EP costs, the price is \$1.49.

Cover drawing of Guy Carawan is by LSR
co-editor Jon Pankake.

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: VOLUME TWO
(Folkways 2397)

"The cuckoo singeth as she flies..she sucketh small flowers and never calleth cuckoo 'till summer draweth nigh," sings the arty balladeer. "The cuckoo she wobbles as she flies..she never hollers cuckoo 'till the Fourth of July" sings the country musician -- and therein lies more than a little of the philosophy of country music and the country musician. The literary sophistication of the ballad and the self-pity of the blues get a knowing wink and an impudent razzberry from him. His music is perhaps more genuinely American than any other form of our folk music, for, in addition to drawing on every traditional and popular music source, its attributes -- optimism, painful honesty, joy, the humor that comes with self-knowledge, toughness, innocence, strong affirmation, pragmatism, simplicity, and love of life -- are the very traits that made pre-Atomic Age America a great and unique cultural, political, and social entity. Though dying rapidly, these traits are being rediscovered by a few of our youth -- not the least of whom are the New Lost City Ramblers. This, their fourth album, again aptly demonstrates the ability of dedicated and sensitive persons to recapture their musical heritage.

At the risk of appearing prejudiced, I must again pick a John Cohen-led song as the top effort on the record. It's WHOOP 'EM UP, CINDY, and John is sounding more and more like the reincarnated spirit of Uncle Dave Macon. Not far behind is Mike Seeger's WHEN FIRST TO THIS COUNTRY -- true in spirit, if not text, to the incredible Gant Family original in the Library of Congress. Mike's singing of the old-time "ballits" is likewise growing in stature. True connoisseurs of the Ramblers' instrumentals will not be satisfied with HAWKINS RAG (for its devices are pale recreations of the stops and synchronizations of DALLAS RAG), but they will go out of their heads over UP JUMPED THE DEVIL. Sparked by Tom Paley's razzmatazz banjo, the boys kick the living bejabbers out of this one -- and to hear them do it is sheer ecstasy! Others wonders to be heard include countrified versions of FRANKIE AND JOHNNY (called LEAVING HOME), THE MERMAID (called THE RAGING SEA), TOM DOOLEY, and the best DIDN'T HE RAMBLE one could hope to hear -- plus ragtime guitar, steel guitar, and autoharp picking in the best country manner. Don't be deceived by the cover photo of three sprucey-looking gents with instruments -- the music inside is as

good as you heard in the albums with the old-timey covers. If you must -- lie, cheat, or steal to get this album -- then plan to leave it on your turntable for a week or two. It's fantastic.

THE SOHO SKIFFLE GROUP

(Melodisc EP 7-72) An English record.

THE CUMBERLAND 3: FOLKSCENE U.S.A.

(Roulette 25121)

"I'm going to preach you all a little sermon...about commercialism..."

There is nothing really important about either of the above two albums. They are simply two more commercially-conceived, dollar-minded albums of recorded folkum. One is American; the other is English. Together, they seem to represent pretty much what is being done in the so-called Folk Renaissance of recorded folk music. And, I'm afraid, the majority of what is being done by both American and British record companies (and what is bought by English and American record-buyers) is out-and-out junk. It seems simply to be a case of the deserving companies being no better off than they were before -- while the rich companies who do not depend on folk music for a living continue to get richer. Capitol has made a mint with the Kingston Trio and yet contributed nothing to American folk music compared to, say, Moses Asch of Folkways. Yet, everyone knows that Moses Asch certainly isn't getting rich with his New Lost City Ramblers

recordings.

The Cumberland 3 are an interesting case in point as to just how far the pop-music Kingston Trio influence has gone. The resemblance in sound between the two groups is nothing short of fantastic: not only do they sound alike in group singing, but, individually, each member of the Cumberland unit sounds exactly the same as his imitated counterpart in the Kingston Trio. Dave Guard even wrote the liner notes for the Cumberland album, and, naturally, he likes the group. Practically every record company in the business now has a Kingston Trio cover-group and they all sound practically alike -- and this is what they are trying to achieve. They all want a pop-music sound that will appeal to both parent and teenager alike -- something nice, fresh, and bouncy; something musically pleasing to the ear and mentally unchallenging. Mediocrity has become the key word, and traditionalism, authenticity, and scholarship have fallen by the wayside. Ethics are completely out of the question. Everybody screams "I wrote this, I wrote that" at the top of their lungs.

Yet, there are a few honest companies who do record good folk music. Folkways remains at the top of that list, producing literally hundreds of fine folk albums a year. Topic Records of England is another good company, but

with most of the rest of the companies, it is strictly hit or miss. Tradition has done a lot of fine recordings, and, as a result of it, probably is destined to remain a small voice in the field because their records simply do not sell well enough for them to expand. Vanguard makes a big show of "Recordings For the Connoisseur" and fails to live up to it. The results are usually "pretty" folk music with concert-trained singers who produce an easy-to-listen-to sound. Most of their LP's are also orchestrated which, needless to say, ruins them. Elektra started out with some fine work back in their 10" days and still have some excellent Jean Ritchie LP's, but, by and large, Jac Holzman & Company seem to have grown fat and contented on the likes of Oscar Brand, SKI SONGS, the Limeliter, Josh White, and other slick and sophisticated cocktail-party folkum. Riverside, a company which did some really good field recordings and much honest folk music, had to quit making folk records almost entirely because they sold so badly. And this in the middle of the so-called "folk boom." United Artists seemed to express some interest in doing good folk work in their early days, but their latest folk release (and that was a long time ago) was FOLK SONG FESTIVAL AT CARNEGIE HALL, a prostitution of Alan Lomax's FOLK SONG '59 concert. Since then,

they have done nothing, and probably will not do much more in the folk field. Stinson Records have recently re-formed (see LSR #5) and are now in business again with a truly great line of folk LP's. The way things stand now, it is almost too much to hope that they will sell enough records to stay afloat and break even. Indeed, the whole question of good recorded folk music seems to hang in the balance of two or three small companies. Will they make enough money to stay out of the red or will people forget about them completely? What in the world would happen to the folk LP if Moses Asch went out of business? How would people like Pete Steele or Roscoe Holcomb or even the New Lost City Ramblers get recorded? The answer is that they wouldn't. They are valid folksingers and they sing in the true and pure traditional sense and this is exactly what would be held against them if they tried to get some larger record company to record them. To record these people is a labor of love and not one of making money. How many records do you think a Pete Steele album sells? A thousand? Even five hundred? I doubt it. Very few companies would be willing to take a chance on it. Yet an album from the Kingston Trio or the Cumberland 3 or any other ridiculous group in the

same genre probably sells well over five hundred or a thousand records here in the Twin Cities alone. And this is the situation in recorded folk music today. We have our Kingston Trio, Weavers, etc., and over in England they have groups like the Soho Skiffle Group. The Soho Group consists of a bunch of florescent British 13-year-olds banging away in rock-and-roll fashion at guitars and washboards and all pretentiously trying to look very, very Brandoesque and devil-may-care. It looks as if they would be more at home in a sandbox than on a nightclub floor. And they sound even worse. If you can imagine what a 13-year-old English kid sounds like trying to sing Negro blues when his major influences seem to have been Sal Mineo, Jimmy Durante, Lonnie Donegan, and Leadbelly, you can imagine the sound of this EP. It is a pity that both England and the United States have to rely, by and large, on this type of presentation of folk music to gain record sales. Perhaps there is some hope for us now that the Folk Renaissance is upon us, but records such as these make one wonder if such a folk resurgence is worth it. Will these records make people curious enough to go out and buy the real thing? Will anyone who hears the Soho Skiffle Group be interested enough to dig into the roots of American Negro folk music? Or, will records like these just help to sell more and more of the same hapless pap and less and less of the real thing until the real and the true and the traditional at

last have no place in a world grown so commercial as to have cut off all ties with heritage forever because heritage simply does not sell. This is a question worth thinking about. Will the "commercial authenticity" (quote from BILLBOARD) of the Cumberland 3 soon replace Jean Ritchie as valid cultural and traditional folk music of the U.S.A.? It could happen unless something is done about it fast.

Note: The Soho Skiffle Group cited above is NOT the same group that records for Time Records under the name of the Original Soho Skiffle Group. See LSR #1 for their review.

ANGOLA PRISON SPIRITUALS (Louisiana Folklore Society A-6)

This record, recorded by Harry Oster, is, according to Oster's notes, "a survey of the major styles in which folk Negroes sing religious songs." Almost every devotee of Negro spirituals in their authentic form will find something here that he likes, and most people will relish it all. Every style from the oldest to the newest is here. According to the notes, one singer was influenced by Johnny Mathis! A few numbers fail to catch fire, but an extremely high emotional level is

achieved on most of the tracks. Listen especially to Robert Pete Williams, a murderer, and probably the most important discovery of Oster's recent travels: he is one of the real masters of the guitar and has a truly great singing style. There are a couple of fine quartet tracks which devotees of modern spiritual recordings (like those on the VeeJay and Peacock labels) will like. Listen also to the unaccompanied performance of the old spiritual GO DOWN MOSES by Roosevelt Charles. A comparison of this version -- direct, humble, and full of beautiful Negro melodic ornaments -- with the pretentious version of Paul Robeson, so Europeonized in its melody and harmony that it could have almost been written by Brahms, will show how erroneous is the impression of the Negro spiritual which Robeson (and, alas, that fine singer Marian Anderson) have given to the American urban public. To get back to the roots, listen to the spontaneous singing of Charles, Williams, and their cellmates -- this is singing which defies any kind of "improvement." For the final clincher, listen to Tom Dutson sing ~~DI~~ MY GRAVE WITH A SILVER SPADE. Another triumph for Oster and Folk-Lyric.
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

Folk-Lyric Records and free catalogs are available from Joseph Hickerson, 509 East Cottage Grove, Bloomington, Indiana.

REVEREND PEARLY BROWN: GEORGIA STREET
SINGER (Folk-Lyric 108)

"As busy shoppers pass quickly and usually indifferently by, a blind street singer wanders the downtown section of Macon, Georgia, playing his battered guitar and singing poignantly of his faith in God."

This is Reverend Pearly Brown, whose singing will be of high interest to those who like Negro spirituals. Reverend Brown has two completely distinct styles which alternate on this recording. One of them is directly adapted from the singing and playing of the well-remembered Blind Willie Johnson, who Brown is said to have heard as a child. The other, interesting but not musically rewarding, is a Negro adaptation of the hillbilly "sacred" style of such entertainers as Roy Acuff and Eddy Arnold. One is struck by the rich direct strong character of the voice in both styles and by the practically faultless and always interesting (even when very simple) guitar accompaniments. I am not especially fond of Brown's hillbilly-adapted style on songs such as GREAT SPECKLED BIRD -- it seems to me to have the incongruity of Leadbelly singing SPRINGTIME IN THE ROCKIES. Although Brown is obviously feeling his BIRD

quite deeply, his version seems a bit stiff compared to the swaying exuberance of the original.

However, Brown loses every hint of stiffness or incongruity when he goes into the Johnson material. These performances are unashamed copies of Blind Willie, and are incomparably superior to any other attempts to recreate Johnson that I am aware of. I don't mean to say that these fairly well-recorded performances will replace the Blind Willie recordings in anyone's collection, but a listen to these sides will show that Brown has achieved an outstanding proficiency at the "knife" style for which Johnson is remembered.

According to the notes, his equivalent to the knife is a Chevrolet bushing worn on the little finger. Brown's voice is easier to listen to than Johnson's and is a good deal more optimistic in tone, but never incongruous with the Johnson songs or their spirit. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS: THOSE PRISON BLUES
(Folk-Lyric 109)

Harry Oster's discovery of Robert Pete Williams in the Louisiana State Pen is the outstanding event in that field since Lomax' discovery of Leadbelly over twenty-five years ago. Pardons, it seems, don't come as easy now as they did then, and, at last report, the 46-year-old Williams is still a lifer.

It cannot be denied that Williams has had access to a radio (most likely he's heard Muddy Waters) and you may recognize a figure or a phrase from any number of modern blues singers here and there. But Williams' style is overwhelmingly that of the archaic and unspoiled primitive country blues, without much respect for the strict 12-bar form or for European melody or harmony. There is even less formalism here than in the old records of Blind Lemon Jefferson --

often thought of as the zenith of recorded primitive blues. To these ears, Robert Pete has much more excitement and emotion. His voice is not quite as strong as Broonzy's or Leadbelly's, but it is a match for any folksinger's in emotional potency. Defiance is here, as in most blues, but the subtler emotions are used to a degree few singers have attained. The way Williams tosses off the fabulous vocal ornamentation of his blues is so natural you feel he was born with it. Compare it to the self-conscious way Broonzy does the same kind of thing on Columbia's BIG BILL'S BLUES.

Unlike Jefferson, Williams is partial to fast tempos, building up tremendous excitement in every track. But PARDON DENIED AGAIN shows that he is very capable in slow blues as well. His guitar is in every way equal to his singing: he seems to have an endless store of beautiful figures, turns, and

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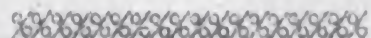
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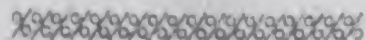
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passages to draw from (compared to singers such as Jesse Fuller, that erstwhile guitar wizard Josh White, and even Leadbelly, who have a tendency to beat a good guitar figure into the ground). When he joins with a fine 12-string guitarist named Hogman Maxey on BOOGY WOMAN (a song with strong sexual motives), the results are fantastic.

Here is a near miracle of recording -- a singer who has developed to a fabulous level of artistry in an all-Negro environment, completely free of any reason or desire to "refine" for a sophisticated folkum market, recorded with all the fidelity and care of the best folk recording techniques. The cornerstone of Negro music on LP -- Lightning Hopkins on Folkways, Leadbelly on Stinson SLP 51, Sonny and Brownie on Fantasy, and John Lee Hooker on Audio-Lab -- can now welcome another -- Robert Pete Williams on Folk-Lyric.
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

ANGOLA PRISONERS' BLUES (Louisiana Folklore Society A-3)

"Wonder why they electrocute a man, baby.. at the one o'clock hour of night..the current much stronger..people turn out all the light."

These ironic lyrics are from this set which includes the blues of three convicts from the Louisiana State Penitentiary -- Guitar Welch, Hogman Maxey, and Harry Oster's favorite, Robert Pete Williams.

The point is made that, contrary to general thought, the men singing here are exposed to the outside world via radio programs, and the songs they hear have an effect on them. The style of Guitar Welch seems to bear this out -- the background of ELECTRIC CHAIR BLUES sounds much like John Lee Hooker's style on many of his Modern recordings. The backing on Hogman Maxey's BLACK NIGHT FALLING also seems to have been Hooker-inspired. His voice is strong here, but his guitar lacks originality. His version of STAGOLEE has much more excitement, probably due to the percussive handling of the 12-string guitar.

Robert Pete Williams has the remaining four cuts and shows more consistent originality. His voice, raw and low, is emotional and fitted to the songs he does. The reason that Oster prefers him to the other singers, according to the notes, is that he is more creative and communicative. And this is so. The notes also say that Williams sees music as a force which engulfs him. This is forcefully brought home in the moving PRISONER'S TALKING BLUES. Robert Pete accompanies himself on 12-string guitar with low, sad notes which evoke the poignant despair of a man in for life. This is the best cut on the album -- the rest seem rather anti-climactic -- although

Williams' version of Blind Willie's MOTHERLESS CHILDREN HAVE A HARD TIME is nice. His other selection, I'M LONESOME, is a blues with conventional lyrics but an interesting vocal and instrumental style very reminiscent of the legendary Robert Johnson.

This album is not for the faint-hearted. There are no short takes here -- they go until they're finished, no matter how long that may take. Blues students will like it -- and like it better and better each time they play it. (Reviewer: Dave Glover)

POSSUM UP A SIMMON TREE (Folk-Lyric 107)

It's strange that this album has gone by with comparatively little notice as it's one of the finest and most exciting collections of traditional, mainstream, and down-home blues to be released in a long time. It features Blind Snooks Eaglin (who Oster has recorded for Folkways) on guitar; Percy Randolph, a New Orleans pushcart junk-dealer, on harp; and Lucius Bridges, an auto mechanic, on washboard. Needless to say, it's not a commercial album.

Snooks plays a very complex and ringing guitar -- on one cut, STUDY WAR NO MORE, he makes it sound like a piano. On the slower numbers, his backing sounds a lot like Lightning Slim, an Excello blues

artist. The harp of Percy Randolph (also heard on Folkways -- FOLK MUSIC U.S.A.) is mournful, intense, and driving. The notes say that he has never heard Sonny Terry -- on MODEL T AND THE TRAIN, he blows the finest train blues I've heard since Sonny Terry's LOCOMOTIVE BLUES. As far as I'm concerned, Randolph is just behind Sonny Terry for the title of greatest harmonica player. The washboard (which everybody takes a turn on) provides a driving beat and unmatched exuberance -- coupled with Randolph's harp and Snooks' guitar on the title song, POSSUM UP A SIMMON TREE, it is fabulous. The group is adept with slow blues too, as evidenced by THAT'S ALL RIGHT, and Percy Randolph does a primitive version of Blind Lemon's JACK O'DIAMONDS, accompanying himself on harp and "tom-tom" -- actually the head of a banjo. Another interesting cut is MARDI GRAS MAMBO -- a blend of blues vocal quartet harmonies, a somewhat pop melody, and a mambo rhythm. This is an informal and swinging set -- at the end of one song, a train blues recorded at Snooks' house, Snooks' father out in the kitchen pulled out a harmonica and added a rhythmic postscript which was left in the song. The songs have been taken from everywhere -- New Orleans jazz bands, folk songs, etc., -- and Snooks'

version of ROCK ME MAMA is an almost exact copy of the one Muddy Waters did for Chess Records a few years back. This is a good album -- for me, one of the best of the year. Take a listen to it.
(Reviewer: Dave Glover)

Folk-Lyric Records have four LP's in addition to what has been reviewed here. They are -- two albums of Louisiana folk music (a Sampler and a Cajun LP), an album by Harry Oster himself (singing and playing guitar), and an LP of prison worksongs recorded at Angola Prison. LSR will review them as soon as they can be obtained.

BEEN HERE AND GONE. Volume 10, Music of the South. Collected by Frederic Ramsey. (Folkways 2659)

The title of this excellent documentary record refers to Ramsey's attitude toward Negro culture in the South. During his field trips, his "principal concern was to find out and record...a disappearing strain of music and life.." While the material Ramsey has recorded is so vital and so alive that one must point out that the South is giving up its ghost but reluctantly, he is, of course, entirely correct -- and the general air of the recording is one of sadness and nostalgia. The track-lining holler heard on the record, for instance, is already a rare event; and while field work done by hand continues, the accompany-

ing chants and hollers are nearly obsolete -- mere echoes of a less hurried and less mechanized age. Perhaps the most poignant sound on the record is the background roar of tractor and passing automobiles on the cut of field hollers. And the street bands (recorded on scene, and with an unaware onlooker discussing rock-and-roll) with their turn-of-the-century sound; the street vendors' cries; and the antebellum sound of the hunting horn with its echoes of Faulkner's "Old Ben" and "Tenny's Jim" -- all tug the emotions in a similar lost-dream manner.

But if the context of the music is decay, the music itself -- as well as the performers -- speaks of a vivid life. The most remarkable of the individual performers is an incredibly gifted man named Horace Sprott -- Ramsey's most prolific informant, and a musician who sings, claps, dances to a skiffle band, blows hunt and train pieces on the French harp, and chops cotton to his own chanting as though he were unaware that this is 1960 and Negro folk music must be properly accompanied by orchestra and chorus. Hardly less amazing is Dora Bliggen, a New Orleans street vendor and the possessor of a most powerful and natural singing voice. Her fervent singing of O LORD HAVE MERCY, with passionate dancing and exclaiming at the conclusion, is so gripping an esthetic experience as to make the professional singing of an

Odetta, by comparison, about as moving as the honking of a Klaxon horn.

In the years to come, when the vendors and the gandy dancers and skiffers and brass bands will have gone their way forever, their aural record will remain for us to study and wonder at -- thanks to Frederic Ramsey. I, for one, am grateful that someone as talented and creative (witness the accompanying notes and photographs as well as the editing of the disc itself) as Ramsey has cared enough to document this phase of rural culture -- a phenomenon that has "done been here and gone."

This record was designed to accompany Frederic Ramsey's book, *BEEN HERE AND GONE*, published by the Rutgers University Press.

LEADBELLY: NEGRO FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (Folkways 7533)

Leadbelly rides again! For the benefit of the nation's children, Moses Asch has unshelved a sizable bunch of Leadbelly cuts and released them on an attractive new 12" LP. As far as I can determine, most or all of the material in this album has never been issued before by Folkways, Stinson, or anybody else. This alone should be enough impetus for a good many people to buy the

album. The remarkably good fidelity, sometimes unsteady singing, and the presence of songs which certainly weren't part of Leadbelly's original repertoire lead me to place these recordings quite late in Leadbelly's life.

This is a perplexing album. It seems obvious that tape editing has been done, and that the material has been gathered from several different sessions, but the question is -- how much tape editing and dubbing? The notes are no help -- they give nothing but the lyrics. Many of the songs have audience participation which sometimes sounds so well rehearsed that it might have been dubbed in after the audience had listened to the record. But in the monologue between the songs, Leadbelly seems (most of the time, anyway) to be talking to an audience of children. The children do not sound like the same group on all the tracks. Then -- on GOOD MORNING BLUES -- the children are missing and Leadbelly is accompanied by the worst jazz band I have ever heard. The answer might be simple -- this cut could just have been borrowed from another session -- but then, on the last cut of Side 1, Leadbelly is leading his children through some spirituals when, in the middle of SWING LOW SWEET CHARIOT, the same band materializes out of

nowhere. It would seem unlikely that Leadbelly would have this band sitting on the stage to accompany him at a children's songfest. It is all a fascinating riddle that Moses Asch has not seen fit to give us the solution to. As for the songs themselves, I might as well state right away that most of these are better heard on other Leadbelly records. The record starts with a snippet from IRENE sung quite badly off-key -- and then Leadbelly (after a dubbed-in-sounding greeting to his children audience) launches right into a performance of JOHN HENRY with an inspired, driving guitar accompaniment quite unlike any of his other recordings of the song. Then BOLL WEEVIL (better done on Stinson) is followed by a very fine blues, WHEN A MAN'S A LONG WAY FROM HOME, which I haven't heard elsewhere (Huddie's spoken introduction is a lulu). Then the honky-tonk GOOD MORNING BLUES, and a group of spirituals (including the hackneyed version of SWING LOW). Side 2 begins with -- guess what? -- ROCK ISLAND LINE; then comes JULIE ANN JOHNSON, which sounds like an older recording than the others on the set; then comes an incredibly bad performance of HAUL AWAY JOE which sounds like Leadbelly was trying to pick out a song which he just heard on a phonograph record. Then, THE CHRISTMAS SONG, and the children, absent from most of Side 2, return for the last cut to join Leadbelly in THE SAME BOAT BROTHER. At times this album sounds like a deliberate attempt to make folkum out of

Leadbelly (SING ALONG WITH LEADBELLY?), but on the other hand we must remember that he was quite fond of leading group-singing and (in his gentle old age) liked to sing for children. With the Stinson PLAY PARTIES long out of print, this is the only Leadbelly album devoted exclusively to the lighter side of his repertoire, and it is not without its value. Furthermore, no matter how bad or good these performances may be, we must be grateful to Mr. Asch for making them available to make more complete our heritage of one of the very greatest of folksingers. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JOSH WHITE -- THE NEGRO IMAGE

by Barry Hansen

In the light of recent developments in Josh White's style, I was very interested to come across a set of pre-war Columbia 78's by "Joshua White and his Carolinians," a collection of "vocal blues" collectively titled CHAIN GANG. And, wouldn't you know it, this set contains the very same tunes with which Josh has recently been bewitching his Elektra audiences. NINE-FOOT SHOVEL, CRYIN' WHO CRYIN' YOU, GOIN' HOME BOYS, TROUBLE, TOL' MY CAPT'N -- all are there. The difference between these performances and the recently recorded ones is astounding. This is not to say that the old ones are unspoiled Negro folk music, although

that would have made a very nice story. They are obviously arranged and packaged, like the Elektra set, for sophisticated white audiences. The difference is in the kind of impression White is apparently trying to make. You all know the mood of the Elektra set -- with well-rehearsed grunts, Josh tries to pretend he is actually chopping rocks while he is making the record -- and the whole mood is one of arrogance, defiance, and he-man sweat. There is none of this in the old records. These performances are much quieter, and have no arrogance or exhibitionism. Instead, there is a quiet and humble sadness. Even TOL' MY CAPT'N is tragic and resigned. The performances are rehearsed, but never over-arranged or the least bit gimmicked. They are, in fact, overwhelmingly simple. It might be said that the difference between these two albums represents more than an evolution in White's style. Perhaps it is a sign of changes in the Negro stereotype which Negroes themselves are giving to their vastly-appreciative white audiences. The quiet, humble Negro almost hopelessy pleading for an improvement in his lot is out of style. People of 1960, perhaps, lack sympathy. White seems to have found that the picture of the invincible John Henry-type impresses them much more.

A TRIBUTE TO WOODY GUTHRIE -- in LSR #5.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Dear Flapjack & Nelson, Co.: ..You certainly publish the most obdurately opinionated and interesting magazine one could wish for..Best wishes for a long life..

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Dear Editors: Fine magazine. Please bill me for a subscription from the first issue.

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Editors: I am one of the lucky ones to take part in the LSR audience-response test. I have enjoyed all three issues thoroughly, and, as the local record stores don't carry a very wide selection of folk records, I have long depended on the reviews carried every now and then in the wide group of publications that review folk records every now and then (and in the folk music magazines that review folk records regularly but come out every now and then). Your views don't always coincide with mine

but generally I think we agree. For instance, I don't think Cisco Houston's Vanguard record is "miserable." Certainly it would be better without all that chorus and stuff but I still enjoy the record. On the other hand I can't develop any enthusiasm for Leon Bibb even on the Newport record. I bought the Folkways Rolf Cahn LP and the Commodore Almanac Singers LP directly as a result of your reviews. I thank you. When the budget allows it I expect to order some English records. I was extremely interested in your discussion of the Jack Elliott LP's. In the new LSR you mention Paul Clayton's HOMEMADE SONGS AND BALLADS as one you have heard of but haven't seen. I haven't seen it either but I found Billboard's review interesting. A few months back, that publication reviewed a single (Monument 416) of THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND and WHO'S GONNA BUY RIBBONS WHEN I'M GONE. They stated: "Clayton impresses strongly on his first wax outings." In their LP review on May 30, they say: "... highly entertaining for the buyer looking for a new voice and sound." Isn't it grand that Paul Clayton has finally made his record debut? Maybe someone could talk Oscar Brand into recording? I think your magazine is fine and like Pete Seeger I hope you will continue to publish

regularly. Yours truly,
JAY SMITH
Jacksonville, Florida

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Dear Editors: In the next two months I will be concerned with several conventions such as the American Library Association in Montreal that we attend and where we exhibit. I appreciate your thoughtfulness in asking me for an article and I think that in August I will be able to write you something about Woody Guthrie.
Sincerely yours,

MOSES ASCH
Folkways Records
New York, N. Y.

Editors' Note: LSR will continue to run any and all information and articles on Woody Guthrie as a sort of continuous tribute to "America's greatest folk poet." Readers who wish to contribute information about Woody are heartily invited to do so. We are certainly looking forward to Mr. Asch's article.

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Dear Sirs: There is no experience more satisfying than reading somewhere else unexpectedly what you yourself feel violently toward a

subject -- folk music ... Your LSR is excellent.

DAVE BARNUM
Minneapolis, Minn.

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Gentlemen: I hope you'll excuse the rather disoriented beginning to this letter but I still can't get over it. Seeing so many of my own ideas on folk music in print is a rather pleasant surprise. Not everyone to whom I've shown your magazine has been as happy as yours truly, but this is to be expected. Here in Seattle, we have people interested in all phases of folk music -- from the Pete Steele variety to the neo-quasi-pseudo variety, and, as a consequence, the reactions have been quite varied. My personal feelings are that your greatest service can be rendered by continuing to review records, articles, etc., that are of significance, as per your orientation, rather than wasting precious pages telling your readers what not to buy -- what is junk. If they don't know that or can't tell by the time they read LSR, they'll be no wiser when

they finish. Why is it that no one has put out a disc of Frank Hamilton? His one band on Volume 3 of the Newport Folk Festival record is better than the whole output of the Kingston Trio and a half dozen others of the same ilk. Many of your banjo- and guitar-playing readers may be interested in the following:

Clifford Essex Music Co.
20 Earlham Street
London W. C. 2, England

They have a large number of books on banjo instruction, chord manuals, etc., plus books on guitar at very reasonable prices. They also publish a magazine (B.M.G.) which is devoted to all types of fretted stringed instruments. Best wishes for continued success.

IRWIN NASH
Seattle, Washington

Editors' Note: Reader Nash is interested in trading tapes and information on the 5-string banjo. He is interested in all types of banjo music. Anyone who wishes to establish correspondence can reach him at 3122 35th So., Seattle 44, Washington.

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SUBSCRIBE TO THE LITTLE SANDY TODAY!!!

Dear Editors: I like your magazine, and NOT ONLY because it likes me, but because it fills a spot where a loud voice needs to be heard: THIS WE LIKE, THIS WE DO NOT LIKE. Being of a gentler nature and more different, I sometimes think you are too hard on people, but when I think of the people you are hard on, and how kind the royalties checks are to them for what they are doing to the songs we admire, I think maybe it has to be done even if it hardly hurts them a bit. Let us not yield to despair in these stirring times. Cordially and always,

MALVINA REYNOLDS
Berkeley, California

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Dear Paul and Jon: LSR is a great lil' journal and really interesting. I get a "bang" out of those reviews. Keep them in that vein. You reviewed (page 19, issue 1) Ed McCurdy's FRANKIE AND JOHNNY on Classic Editions 1045. I've looked high and low for a copy of that on By-Line (without success). Do you have the address for this Classic Editions company? I'd like to order one before they go to h--l.

Incidentally, your review of Jimmie Rodgers MY ROUGH AND ROWDY WAYS (page 7, issue 3) states that this is his 3rd album of re-releases. This is at least his 5th or 6th. Here is a run-down on them:

- (1) JR Memorial Album #1 Victor P-244
- (2) JR Memorial Album #2 Victor P-282
- (3) JR Memorial Album #3 Victor P-318
- (4) JR Memorial Album #4 Victor PT-3035

TRAVELING BLUES

- (5) TRAIN WHISTLE BLUES Victor 1640
- (6) ROUGH AND ROWDY WAYS Victor 2112

This makes 60 of his songs reissued, with 51 remaining (several were re-issued as singles). Also, the first 4 albums above were 10" LP's and the last two were 12". You also state the sidemen were Earl Hines and Louis Armstrong. This has been argued for a long time but never settled. Actually, it's still a rumor. Even Victor does not have definite information on it. We have tried for years to persuade the majors to reissue the old favorites: Uncle Dave Macon, the Carter Family, etc. Victor advises us there is a good chance that an LP will be issued of the Carter Family. Regards,

JOE NICHOLAS
 Editor
 DISC COLLECTOR
 Palmer, Michigan

Editors' Note: LSR is certainly glad to hear that Victor may release a Carter Family LP soon. We hope record sales will be successful enough to warrant much, much more of the same. The Ed McCurdy record can be ordered from Classic Edition, Inc., 719 10th Ave., N. Y. 19, N. Y. The price is \$4.98.

Joe Nicholas' magazine, DISC COLLECTOR, "The Country Record Collector's Bible," and the Official Organ of International Hillbilly Record Collector's Exchange, can be ordered for \$1.00 a year by sending to Pete Kuykendall, 323 No. Piedmont St., Apt. 2, Arlington 3, Va. It's an excellent magazine.

9/5/55 9/5/55 9/5/55

Dear Editors: I am sorry not to have written sooner to tell you how much I have enjoyed reading each issue of THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW. I pick up each issue with a sense of anticipation that I will undoubtedly find some outrageous opinion or revealing insight, and, so far, I have not been disappointed. I do not agree with all your forthright ideas, but we would both be disappointed if I did. I am happy to realize that you have no "sacred cows" and that you speak your piece as you see it.

Would you be good enough to write something about yourselves and your reasons for starting the magazine? I'd like to run something on you and LSR in the next issue of SING OUT.

Your review of th HOOTENANNY AT CARNEGIE HALL, incidentally, meant a great deal to me. Ed Badeaux and myself edited the album. and we, too,

were convinced that Pete's performance of JACOB'S LADDER was a great work of folk art -- and you'd be surprised at the opposition we had to overcome to include the number on the record. Best regards,

IRWIN SILBER
Editor
SING OUT
New York, N. Y.

o/c/c/o/c/c/o/c/o/c/o

Dear Editors: On a recent visit to New York I picked up the first two copies of your little magazine, and have just finished reading them. I was much pleased with your approach, and I'm enclosing six dollars for a two-years' subscription.

On many points I agree with you -- your enthusiasm for Jean Ritchie and Alan Lomax, your dislike of Milt Okun, the Kingston Trio, and Glen Yarbrough. However, I do not share your admiration of Guy Carawan and Jack Elliott, and I find your attitude a little confusing in places -- for example, you criticize the Limelinters and others for rewriting folksongs, and then you praise the Babysitters' first album in which almost all the songs were rewritten to a greater or less degree -- and were certainly not

improved in the process. On the same basis, you criticize Burl Ives for claiming to have written folk songs -- I haven't yet seen the album in question, but it seems to me that what he claims is copyright on the versions he sings which he has edited and polished, and this is quite in line with what others such as Alan Lomax and Lee Hays are doing. In fact, a great many of the songs which all the younger singers are now singing were literally written in large part by Burl, and learned by others from his early albums. I agree that copyrights on folksongs are getting ridiculous, but Burl is by no means the only offender, or the worst. Sincerely,

EDITH FOWKE
Toronto, Ontario

Editors' Note: We would like to explain our stand (although that does not make it necessarily right) on the above disputed points. The Babysitters' first album was reviewed as a children's album, and not primarily as a folk album. The difference seems to be that one has the purpose of entertaining and delighting children (which we think the Babysitters' first LP did) while the other (like the Burl Ives' LP) is supposedly an adult album and, as such, is subject to adult criticism as to whether or not it is acceptable folk music. It's primary purpose is not necessarily

that of entertainment, but also of education. We are not very strict on children's albums providing they are good fun, but adult folk records must meet certain intellectual and emotional (not to mention traditional) standards. On the United Artists album in question, it is stated -- "All the songs in this album were WRITTEN by Burl Ives.." He does not claim a mere copyright on his versions (which, even then, would be bad enough). On Guy Carawan and Jack Elliott, all we can say is that we feel that they are two of the best of the city folksingers -- what more can we say -- we like 'em.

o/o/o/o/o/o/o/o

Dave Glover's article on Sonny Terry (announced last issue) does not appear this month for two reasons:

1. Sonny's records are coming out so fast and furious that Dave hasn't had a chance to hear them all yet.
2. Putting together the Woody Guthrie Tribute was so much fun that we thought we'd wait a few months and try one on Sonny. Any contributions would be appreciated.

Our much-announced and seldom-seen concert reviews never will see the light of day as an article. They will be worked into record reviews instead.

CURRENT AND CHOICE

THE RURAL BLUES. Edited by Sam Charters. (Folkways 2317)

More collector's items in the blues field. A must.

LIGHTNING HOPKINS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN BLUES (Tradition 1040)

The sad poetry of the blues in song and story.

PETE SEEGER: THE RAINBOW QUEST (Folkways 2454) For Seeger fans.

MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY.

Coll. by John Cohen. (Folkways 2317)

THE COUNTRY BLUES. Charters. (RBF 1)

FURRY LEWIS. (Folkways 3823)

JEAN RITCHIE, OSCAR BRAND, DAVE SEAR AT TOWN HALL (Folkways 2428)

JEAN RITCHIE FIELD TRIP (Collector Limited Edition 1201)

PETE SEEGER: FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (Folkways 7532)

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: SONGS FROM THE DEPRESSION (Folkways 5264)

MALVINA REYNOLDS: ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM (Folkways 2524)

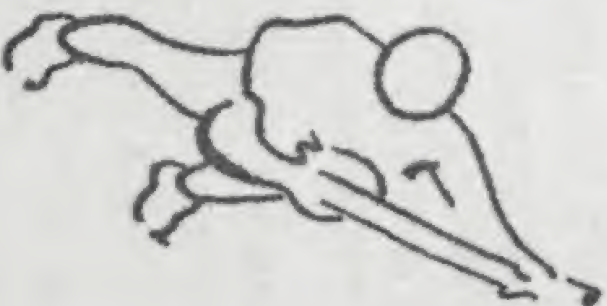
HOOTENANNY AT CARNEGIE HALL (Folkways 2512)

LSR's Tribute to Woody Guthrie should be in the reader's hands in a week or ten days. It will feature articles by Pete Seeger and Malvina Reynolds, plus editorial comment and some original art work. Watch for it soon.

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A TRIBUTE TO WOODY GUTHRIE

no. 5



THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

30c

POETRY ROOM

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EDITOR'S COLUMN
EDITOR'S COLUMN
72*1

BY PAUL NELSON & JON PANKAKE

Our proofreader, Buck Duane, shamefacedly points out the following errors he let through in the last issue: The lead singer for the Country Gentlemen is Charley WALLER, not Charley Walker as listed. The number of THE RURAL BLUES is RBF 202 -- not the Folkways 2317 number Buck typed. (Buck assures us this was not an attempt to sell more copies of MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY, his favorite album). And Mike Russo, the blues artist, is from Portland -- not Seattle, as Duane reported. When accused, Buck wept and assured us it won't happen again ... Many readers are now getting LSR delivered to their doors each month with the latest record news and loudest record analyses in the field. How about you? A mere \$3 does the trick. 3220 Park Avenue So., Minneapolis 7, Minn. See you next month.

THE STINSON RECORD LINE

Stinson Records have recently re-formed and moved from New York City to Los Angeles. In doing so, they have cut many of their old albums and hewed their active catalog down to about 40 LP's or so. Many good folk records have been discontinued (probably for good) but many good ones remain. The only certain way we know of getting any of them is directly from the company itself. They will be glad to send out free catalogs and price lists on request. The address is Stinson Records, P. O. Box 3415, Granada Hills, California. Undoubtedly the best folk records in Stinson's new catalog are the sets by Woody Guthrie and the tremendous Leadbelly Memorial set of four LP's. Barry Hansen, LSR's Leadbelly expert, reviews the Ledbetter set later in this article, and complete reviews of the Woody Guthrie recordings are contained in the Tribute to Woody Guthrie, which begins on page 13. The line now also includes four LP's by Richard Dyer-Bennet (2, 35, 60, and 61), two by Josh White (14 and 15), two by Will Holt (64 and 78), and single offerings by Pete Seeger (a concert, 57), Burl Ives (1), Robin Roberts (her Irish album, 63), Paul Clayton (69), Bob Gibson (76), Ewan MacColl (79), Ewan MacColl with A. L. Lloyd (80), Milt Okun (82), Dick Silvera (87), the Lincoln Brigade (52), and one (and only one) Folksay (5). Harry and Jeanie West, the Mechau Family, Ellen Stekert, Sonny

Terry, Reverend Gary Davis, Bob & Louise DeCormier, and Hally Wood have all been dropped.

LEADBELLY MEMORIAL SET I-IV

The many aficionados of that most magnificent of folksingers, Leadbelly, should be very gratified to see the return of the Stinson record catalog to availability; and, especially, the outstanding item in that catalog -- the four-volume LEADBELLY MEMORIAL. It is unfortunate that this set was not widely distributed by the old Stinson label; the LEADBELLY LEGACY on Folkways, a smaller, more expensive, and quite inferior compilation, has become far better known. The Folkways set is better edited than the Stinson, but a very large proportion of its material was recorded when Leadbelly was an old man -- it shows the singer's great versatility but lacks the Herculean drive that made Leadbelly great. The Stinson set, more simply packaged, comes from, on the whole, earlier and much more stirring recordings. To take the Stinson set album by album: Ironically enough, the core of MEMORIAL I is a fabulous session with Leadbelly accompanied by Sonny Terry on harmonica which was recorded by Moses Asch of Folkways for his old Asch label (which was sold to Stinson). Terry's harmonica

is a joy to the ear and the many blues on this set are works of tremendous power and intensity. The performances of GOOD MORNING BLUES and ON A MONDAY are far superior to those on the LEGACY, and there is also a fabulous disc of Leroy Carr's

HOW LONG BLUES. MEMORIAL II is like LEGACY 1; it is a large collection of quickies from all sections of Lead's repertoire. Unlike LEGACY 1, however, these performances are all solo, recorded at the same time (for the old Disc label). Fine examples of Huddie's piano playing and concertina work are included. The set has much more unity than LEGACY 1.

MEMORIAL III is, like LEGACY 4, a mixture of 78's from different sources. There is nothing here that is badly sung, like the ARMY SONG in LEGACY 4. Rather, there are a big slug of topnotch blues not included at all in the LEGACY -- RED CROSS STORE, RED RIVER, YOU DON'T MISS YOUR WATER, ALBERTA, and a beautiful IN THE EVENING WHEN THE SUN GOES DOWN (another Leroy Carr song) with Sonny Terry. Also a catchy DIGGIN' MY POTATOES.

MEMORIAL IV is the greatest of all, and Leadbelly's crowning achievement on records. Recorded in 1937 by the long-defunct Musicraft label, this set contains a variety of Leadbelly specialties in performances which are still smouldering with the fire that made Leadbelly so sensational

to his first hearers in the 30's. Here is Leadbelly the superman, still young and angry. Huddie was only two years out of prison when he made this set, and there is little sign of the gentle old man who sang SKIP TO MY LOU to little children in the 40's. The Leadbelly of MEMORIAL IV is still Leadbelly the murderer, singing six minutes of hollers done from recent experience and not from well-aged memory. Here is the first recording of BOURGEOIS BLUES, as the events of his first Northern tour still burned in his mind. Here is BOLL WEEVIL as it was meant to be sung. Here is the astounding 12-string guitar work on GALLIS POLE. Here is FANNIN STREET, white-hot, with the salty verse he never recorded again. The last track on the album, DEKALB WOMEN, is probably the greatest prison blues ever recorded by anybody. Folk collectors were happy to pay 55.50 for this album in 1937, when steak was about 40 cents a pound, and, at 53.98 today, it is absurd to pass up. The LEGACY gives an incomplete picture of Leadbelly; but the four albums of the MEMORIAL include nearly all of his best work and all of his overpowering spirit.

The four Leadbelly LP's on Stinson are SLP's 17, 19, 43, and 51.

RECORD REVIEWS

VI.

SONGS OF THE CIVIL WAR (Folkways 5717)
2-12" LP's. Edited by Irwin Silber.

While the songs and notes of this album make it valuable as a companion aural illustration of Silber's "Songs Of The Civil War" (Columbia University Press), I'm afraid I can't find much about it to recommend as an addition to the collection of the listener not especially rabid about Civil War history -- i. e., those who will not purchase the book. The songs are all composed or rewritten -- by popular writers of the period, for the most part, and as such smack strongly of the parade ground, the pre-Victorian parlor, and the political rally. These connotations will certainly have their value to some, if not particularly to this reviewer. The performers, if not the dutiful performances, of the songs are an interesting bunch -- Pete Seeger, The New Lost City Ramblers, Cisco Houston, Jerry Silverman, Ellen Stekert, Hermes Nye, Elizabeth Knight, the excellent new Folkways discovery Bill McAdoo, and a methodical group called The Harvesters. This lineup suggests a historically oriented SING OUT-sponsored Hootenanny (this top will appeal to some and not to others). Some things I did like were Nye's waspish GOOD OLD REBEL, the Ramblers' GOOBER PEAS (although their work on this record is generally dispirited), and JOHNNY IS MY

DARLING as sung by Miss Knight, Ethel Rain, and Joyce Gluck. However, I must thoroughly condemn the inclusion, in an honest and relatively scholarly album, the mess of tin pan alley cliches known as TWO BROTHERS. Such touches make the set of limited interest to the folk fan.

LEON BIBB SINGS LOVE SONGS (Vanguard 9073)
THE WEAVERS AT CARNEGIE HALL, Volume Two
(Vanguard 9075) Reviewed by Bob Dahle.

It may seem an anomaly to some to pair the above two LP's in the same review. Yet, they seem to represent pretty much the Vanguard "Recordings for the Connoisseur" folk music policy -- namely that of "high-class folkum" or "folkum for the intellectual Sociable." The Vanguard type of folkum is not the same brand served up by Capitol or Columbia: it is instead a slick and handsome sort, all dressed up in a black tuxedo and flashy orchestration -- I imagine it is designed to appeal to the upper-middle-class Symphony-goer who isn't too sharp. At any rate, I seriously doubt if any "Connoisseur" of any sort would be caught dead listening to these albums.

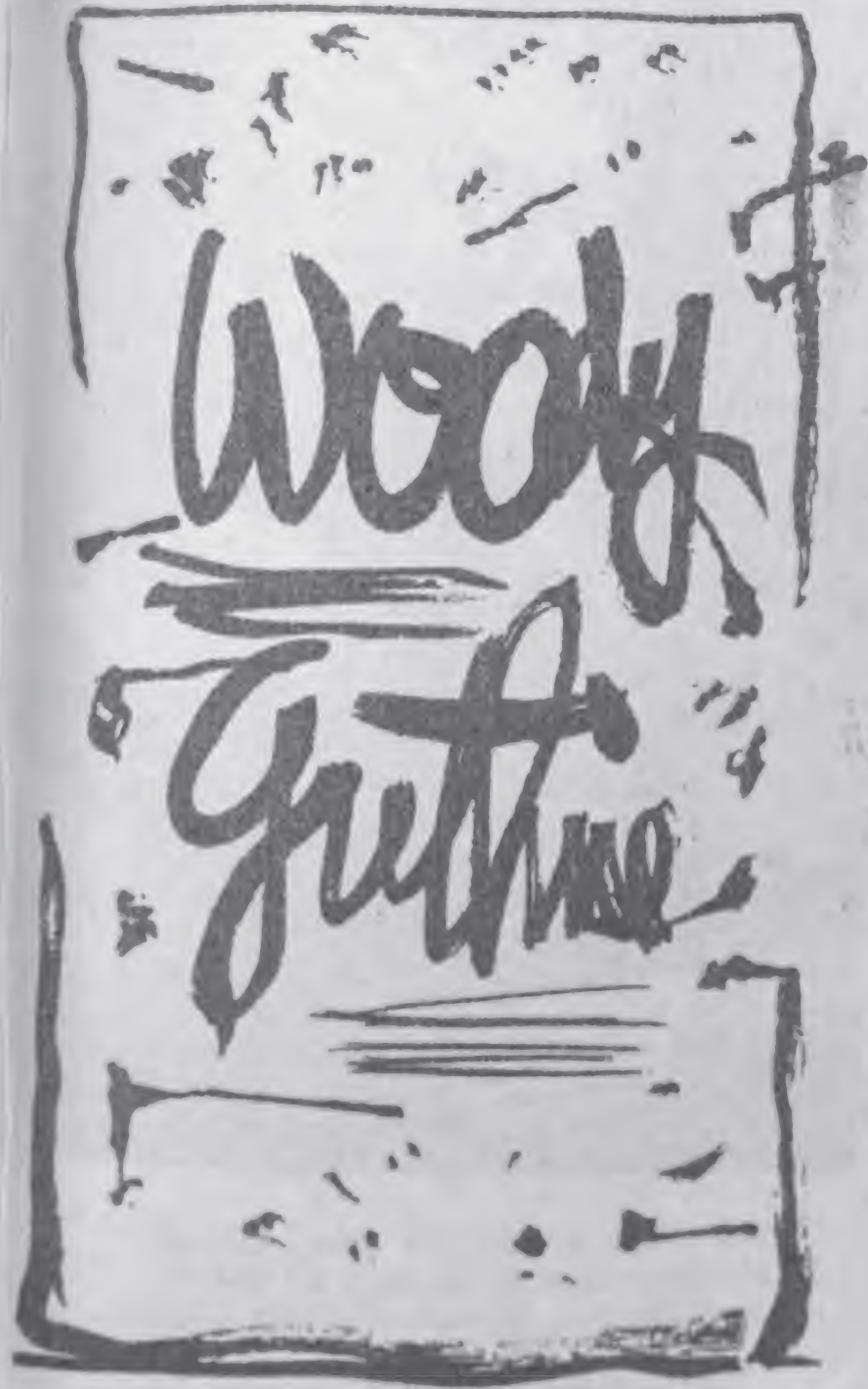
Leon Bibb is a prime offender in this "folk music for people who hate vulgar sounds" policy. His LOVE SONGS album is probably a little bit better than his CHAIN GANG SONGS because orchestras and folk oboes don't really go well with chain gang songs. Apparently Milt Okun

thinks they go excellently with love songs because this LP is full of them. One gets the feeling that Bibb is singing the songs straight off a piece of paper he's seen for the first time -- the musical notes and tones are just right, and there is no feeling whatsoever. English, Irish, Negro, and Southern Mt. songs all come out sounding like Bach church music. Bibb "vocalizes" and "improves" the songs all over the place. DOWN IN THE VALLEY comes out almost unrecognizable with all the fancy minors and vocal and orchestral tricks. DELIA comes in for much the same treatment. One wonders during some of these songs if he's really got the right album -- the liner notes claim it's a folk album. It might make a better martini tray.

The Weavers have a very convenient misconception going for them -- they "have their cake and eat it too." For some strange reason, they have gained general acceptance in both popular music and folk music. They are able to play both sides off against each other and come out with lots of money and much folk critical acclaim as well. As S. W. Bennett's priceless liner notes (for some of the funniest reading in a long time, go back and read his notes for Bibb's CHAIN GANG album -- where he traces DARK IS THE NIGHT back to Homer and has Everyman on the chain gang) state: "For unfancied-up, honest folk songs,

you can't beat the Weavers... (they have) new minted freshness with absolute authenticity (!!!)... the songs become Weavers' songs... their attitude is a more KNOWING one." It is this KNOWING attitude that pretty much sums up the Weavers. The "honest and unfancied-up" treatment of folk songs is, of course, ridiculous. The Weavers aren't much more honest than the Kingston Trio -- they just have more musical ability and taste. They aren't much more "folk" than Jo Stafford -- they just know how to play-act better. Like Vanguard, they have that sanctimonious, heavy-handed religiosity toward folk music and themselves: they wear peace songs on their sleeves and expect to be applauded wildly for mere mention of World Peace or any such subject. It has become a ritual with them. And, as a ritual, it doesn't have much meaning anymore. They present a sort of "professional sincerity" and ritualistic authenticity -- a good and easily-accepted image of the real thing, but actually pretty far from it. For those who liked the Weavers' first Carnegie Hall album, the second will probably be equally (or almost, anyway) as good. Erik Darling is no Pete Seeger but the rest of the act's the same.

WE NEED MONEY! YOURS!! SUBSCRIBE NOW!





The above drawing of Woody Guthrie and the drawing on page 29 are by Joni Tangen, Minneapolis art student.

SOMETHING ABOUT WOODY by Malvina Reynolds

When I heard that Woody was in the hospital sometime in '55, I sent him a copy of my first song book (now about out-of-print), SONG IN MY POCKET, and this started a correspondence of a new sort. That is, I could hardly read his scrawly letters but answered them the best I could anyway, and this seemed to be good enough, for the letters kept coming for some time. For some reason I was always able to make out phrases like "I can see and hear more pure old human truth in every one of your worker stiffy songs than I'd hear in 99 years of" what? Always I thought I was a scrawl-writing expert from having to correct English papers for my living for some years, but this sure beats me. Some day when I'm tied down in jail (everybody who is anybody is in and out of jail around here since the House UNAmerican Committee came by) or otherwise incapacitated, I'll decipher these yellow foolscap pages and add them to the world's precious Woodiana. Finally, I did ask him to type, and that's not much easier to make out because of the incomparable Woody syntax and spelling. But here are a few selections of the correspondence, brought to the public eye for just about the first time, I guess.

Berkeley, California April 29, 1955

Dear Woody: I recently gave a talk on songwriting at the California Labor School, where I held you forth as the best natural-born anonymous folksong writer whose name is known. Point I was making was that every time we talk we sing a little kind of embryonic song with our voices, and a good songwriter bases the line of his song on that very little tune, otherwise the words and music don't marry. It was a very successful lecture, whether I knew what I was talking about or not. I'm enclosing for you a book of my songs. I wrote every living one, both words and music, though anyone who claims originality for a simple tune these days is pulling a long rope; since Adam's time people have been humming and singing and the air is full of those millions of tunes (and I'm not talking about singing commercials -- they are just a clog on the highway and will have to be cleaned away some time to make room for the good tunes that need space to fly about...) I'd be most flattered if some time you would take up that battered gitbox of yours and sing one of my songs -- you might find it fits right in your hand.

Well, he said, as you see, some nice things about the songs, and I quote at length from my letter because it gives you an idea of what I think of Woody better than anything else I could write. Now for another letter of mine, as a running jump into another Woody-ish bit.

May 16, 1955

Dear Woody: As soon as I get over this cold, I will make you some cookies. If there is one thing I am famous for, besides writings songs about overalls and little girls, it is my ginger currant cookies. They not only taste very good, but they are very healthful, being full of vitamins and minerals and all disguised as delicious flavors. If you eat them, I am sure you will get well at once. Your letter was exasperating and frustrating. Every time I got to the exciting part, there was a word scrawled so that I couldn't make it out. And I'm a pretty good scrawl-reader; my husband's handwriting is absolutely anti-social. My husband, name of Bud, is a carpenter when he works, very fine guy but taciturn; that means he doesn't talk very much and I wish some more of my friends were afflicted with that sickness. Many of them do not know the value of silence, which is some of the finest music in the world...Don't tell me you have to scrawl. In important places, as in addressing my letter, or telling me you would appreciate some self-opening dates, your handwriting is as clear as can be. So please write me your letter all over again. And if it isn't the same letter, at least be sure it's a letter I can read the most of. This one will keep me out of mischief for the next

ten years, and that's too bad. I get into some of the best mischief you ever saw...

So his answer:

"Earyedaye Allveenamaye: More folkes had oughtta be hittend by that silencingse kind of a derndbmairer's disease of & by whitche you tell me your goodman there is tookend with I hear so many looseywild-ery damnd flying ceerazeyery goddamnd frothery foamery gosserpity gossupeye slandereynn acusserin falsey lyinge un-true dissyhonerste psykoed jimmy krowed proude proudeyfiend proude hispeedy blab-erin bleerberymouthd looselylippy every street I walk down here & everyplace I go & pass & come to look and to listen that I'd feel and I'd justa bout knowe f'r shure & certaine I'd walked on into sweet olde heaven if I ever did or do onna purepisse er by blinde axxxident stummle into anye damnd placewhere most folkes goes & lives by my good book & my bibeldybibele of sweete olde silence..."

There's more on the same subject, but I do consider the limitations of the Little Sandy, which is not big. Anyway, in handwriting in red and blue at the end of this typewritten letter is the slogan which has become a household word in our household: "COOKIES TALKS LOUDER THAN

WORDS!"

It worked.

Next letter starts: "Deary Viney: Your oatmealeus current eventy cookies made a bigger hit and a bigger splash around here in my 79 B.S.y Hosspetalley Ward than alla our added efforts and energeries and forces of bookysong makingdid make. I just stood here and handed your shoe box around and they spoken to all my creeds and my breeds in here lots plainer than all my sung and my unsung words everer lipped by man."

Then comes a eulogy of womenfolk and their cooking and tending that goes so far beyond the little shoebox of cookies that I think it's worth quoting.

"I see now part ways how it is that it must be all of them little old crispindy brownerish damn things I see you womenfolks run in unback out of my BSH wardyfloor here that keeps every single damn solitary one of my hoppers here hopping our next hops and jumping our next jumps like we do.

It's those little old brownery roundish damn things you girlyfolks smuggle in at my old wardy doors here which gives us dangd guys our strength enuff to try to jump another skip and to keep onna hoppin one more old day without ever quite clearly stopping long enuff here to ask ourselves all these hows and whys and all them whoses and whiches in a very clearly conscious way.

You hit down lots more on our old key secret of life around here than a hunderd old Albert Einysteins and me and Tommer Edisons and ordinary worldly wisery men ever did hit.

I'm still yellin how cookies talks loudest.

I me
Woody

Part #2

Your little cooky things here proved to me how life its own self must dangle and jangle all around those damn pots and dernd pans you females sweat and clink and cuss and cry and weep and slave your old lifes away over.

I sure didnt start in to guess how your fryin pans and your sizzledy skilllets there had that old old key secret of life itself which all of my wisest heads and brains has all and each one missed our guesses at and our guesses about. I didnt know which goes to show you never know anydamn thing about anything for sure and for certain on this planet Earth here. And so I'm still a sayin as to by God how them derndam little old bittsy borownyfried cookyful thingd of yours is one of my overlooked gifts of true living giving genius which God and Christs has both poured alla my females so damed full of.

You ladies and yourse little old browny shoeboxes I guess is what keeps life jumping around here on my greedy worldly damnd planet.

I'm ready to lay you ten thousand to one here that you females and your boxes of danngd brownered kookies keeps my doctor and ally my studentendy nursey ladies here and everywhere hopping our next long loneysome hop in them same kinda of half blinded ways here I see my sickest ones hop.

But my real problem now that stops me deady cold is this one: Just who fries your eatyables for you ladyfolks?

Just what gives you lady folks your everlasting powers to keep on frying and sizzlin like you do?

Just what gives you ladyfolks your everlasting powers to keep onna frying anda sizzlin like you do?

Just what power is it that gives you this kind of ENERGIZING POWER Jesus and God both knows but I me I don't.

Woody Guthrie

LSR proudly announces that the issue you are reading is copyrighted. This is to protect the writings of our non-staff members -- in this issue, Malvina Reynolds, Pete Seeger, and Edith Fowke. This will be our future policy.

WOODY GUTHRIE AND THE GIFT TO BE SIMPLE
By Pete Seeger

Man is born in simplicity but dies of complications. It takes real genius to retain straightforward simplicity. Any damn fool can get complicated. Woody Guthrie was sharply aware of this as a writer of prose and poetry, and as a singer. In his notebooks, we came across this comment: "I got to steer clear of Walt Whitman's swimmy waters." Woody obdurately refused to go along with the rest of the Almanac Singers if we tried to dress up a song with more than two or three main chords. And sometimes, as in his classic version of BUFFALO SKINNERS, he would defiantly play one chord (1) and one only from beginning to end. He was a widely-read man -- I'll never forget the time he discovered Rabelais -- but he fervently despised long literary words and mocked those who used them when short direct words would do better. In his singing, Woody stuck to a flat straight tone, with no curlicues, and only briefly tender. It is no wonder that Woody got along so well with Leadbelly, who also knew these same virtues.

It is a tragedy that Woody was not more widely recorded. But I sometimes pull out a scratchy old 78 rpm record

he made and listen amazed: the clarity of his diction, the straightforward honesty of his presentation. May generations learn from him.

~~1/25/56~~
~~1/25/56~~

A FEW COMMENTS ABOUT WOODY FROM CANADA
By Edith Fowke

Back in 1954 I wrote to Woody to tell him that I frequently used his records on my CBC Network program, "Folk Song Time", saying, "Among the songs that are my favorites and seem to be popular with my audience are 'Gypsy Davy', 'Lost John', 'Hard Traveling', and 'Pastures of Plenty'." That was the time of the McCarthy fever in the United States, so Woody expressed surprise that I could play his songs on the air, and wrote:

"I see whole big swarms & heeds & tribes & bunches & gangs & mobs of American disc-jockys who run up here to me every minute and tell me how they all lost their good spinny jobs just by needling my redicle records here over all of my so named free American stations...all of which goes to prove to me and to you and to all of us around over my planet here how far out ahead of my USOFA your Canada land is when it comes down to the lost freedom of my

disculated waxjockeys or some such. I feel lots healthier tho' to see that all of your own folks's favorites up your way are just about my own same favorites in just almost your same voting order. I'd stick in a few more like 'Hangknot', & 'Jesus Christ' & 'Dope Fiend Robber' & 'The Rape of Ruth Farnsworth' & 'New Zealand Train Wreck' & 'Pretty Boy Floyd' & 'Whoopee Tie Yi Yo' & I guess a few others...."

In another letter Woody told me how he and his family almost settled in Canada after World War I:

"All of us loaded up our old teecrater ford truck of a twenty two vintage and headed up your way there into Canada's orcharding country that lay free and open to homesteaders. But a frizzlin cold blizzard on our parting & our leaving nite did cause the nosey brassy radiator cap to turnaway & to drift with us off down about a lost mile from our border of Mexico to try to dig up an old gold and silvery mine which my own granpa Jerry P. Guthrie found & undug & uncovered & had assayed back herding cattles out across here in nineteen & two. You just never will be able to partways guess to how dang close that all of us did come to driving up & just homesteading our

claims right in your front yard."

Woody went on to mention that he'd been in Canada some years later with the Almanac Singers, and also:

"I hit your Canada place one more trip and time to play and to sing all down along them picket lines made by several living thousands of your goodfine Hamilton steel workers on a strike."

When Joe Glazer and I were compiling our SONGS OF WORK AND FREEDOM we had one problem -- to keep the book from turning into a Guthrie anthology. As we were aiming at as wide a variety as possible, we tried to keep the Guthrie numbers down to a minimum, but still ended up with four which we felt just had to be included: "Union Maid", "So Long, It's Been Good to Know You", "Hard Traveling", and "You Gotta Go Down and Join the Union." As we managed to hold the most prolific of the Wobbly songwriters, Joe Hill, down to two, you can see how Woody dominates the field of workers' protest songs.

FROM AN EDITH FOWKE RADIO SCRIPT --

John Steinbeck on Woody Guthrie: "Woody is just Woody. Thousands of people do not know he has any other name. He is just a voice and a guitar. He sings the songs of a people and I suspect that he is in a way

that people. Harsh-voiced and nasal, his guitar hangin like a tire iron on a rusty rim, there is nothing sweet about Woody, and there is nothing sweet about the songs he sings. But there is something more important to those who will listen. There is the will of a people to endure and fight against oppression."

A WOODY GUTHRIE RECORD DISCOGRAPHY

All the records in this discography are now available to the record-buyer. As far as we know, this list represents the complete Woody Guthrie discography of available works. If any reader knows of some additions to this list, we would appreciate hearing from him. Any and all additions will be printed on arrival.

SONGS TO GROW ON FOR MOTHER AND CHILD (Folkways 7015)

Grassy Grass Grass, Swimmy Swim Swim, Little Sack of Sugar, Rattle My Rattle, I Want My Milk, Grow Grow Grow, 12345678, 1 Day 2 Days 3 Days Old, Washy Wash Wash, I'll Eat You I'll Drink You, Make a Bubble, Who's My Pretty Baby, Write a Word.

TALKING DUST BOWL (Folkways 2011)

Dust Storm Disaster, So Long, Talking Dust Blues, Dust Can't Kill Me, Blowing Down This Road, Dust Bowl Refugee, Tom Joad Parts 1 & 2.

SONGS TO GROW ON, Volume 1 (Folkways 7005)
Put Your Finger in the Air, Come See, Race You Down the Mountain, How Doo Doo, Merry Go Round, Sleepy Eyes, Wake Up, Clean-O, Dance Around, Car Song, Don't You Push Me, My Dolly.

BOUND FOR GLORY (Folkways 2481)

This Land is Your Land, Talking Fishing Blues, Reuben James, Jesus Christ, There's a Better World A'Coming, Stagolee, Little Sack of Sugar, My Daddy, Swimmy Swim Swim, Vigilante Man, Do Re Mi, Pastures of Plenty, Grand Coulee Dam.

THIS LAND IS MY LAND (Folkways 7027)

Two Songs: Columbia River, This Land is My Land.

LONESOME VALLEY (Folkways 2010)

Two songs: Cowboy Waltz (fiddle solo), Sowin' on the Mountain (with Cisco Houston).

TAKE THIS HAMMER -- LEADBELLY LEGACY 1 (Folkways 2004)

One song: Green Corn (with Leadbelly and Cisco Houston)

BALLADS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI (Folkways 5485)

Old Judge Thayer, We Welcome to Heaven, Two Good Men, Vanzetti's Letter, I Just Want to Sing Your Name, Red Wine, You Souls of Boston, Suassos Lane, The Flood and the Storm,

WOODY GUTHRIE & CISCO HOUSTON (Stinson 44)
WOODY GUTHRIE & CISCO HOUSTON, Volume Two
(Stinson 53)
WOODY GUTHRIE, SONNY TERRY, ALEK STEWART:
CHAIN GANG (Stinson 7)

Fortunately, all of Woody Guthrie's fine Stinson work has been saved (except the marvelous SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN HOEDOWNS and the first four FOLKSAYS) on three magnificent LP's. These, aside from Woody's Library of Congress work, represent the best Woody Guthrie now available to the record-buying public, and mighty good Woody Guthrie that is. The songs with Cisco are indeed, as Guy Carawan has said, "the best two-part singing I have ever heard." Song after song is explored to the fullest extent of folk art -- yet all remain fantastically simple in concept: one guitar (sometimes two), a mandolin or a fiddle, and two very ordinary voices bring forth and extol all the beauties of simplicity, taste, and interpretation. The listener realizes he is being CONFRONTED with the real and the beautiful in folk art -- and not the cheap or the easy or the flashy. You do not sing like Woody Guthrie by taking voice lessons or going to Juilliard. Nor do you get the same effects by orchestrating or "improving" a song. This man is a FOLKSINGER in the truest sense of the word. Listen to Woody, Sonny, and Alek

on the CHAIN GANG set -- the whole LP rings with a spontaneous and informal air and you get the feeling that here are three people who not only understand what folk music is and how to perform it, but who ARE a vital part of the music itself. Then put on Harry Belafonte or Leon Bibb or Odetta and compare the difference. Woody is indeed one of the rare ones -- one of the true greats of folk music. One gets the feeling that with him the music is coming from the inside out, and not the more usual vice-versa process. His kind of singing separates the men from the boys, the artists from the hacks. Listen to GYPSY DAVY, one of his best songs (done here without the fabulous "hello Sue") and note the bare simplicity of his style and the marvelous effect he gets with it. Or try JOHNNY HARD, with the wacky verse about "the girl with the rag on her head." Or the wildly stomping OLD TIME RELIGION with Sonny Terry or the gossip with Cisco on COLUMBUS STOCKADE. Then try BADMAN LEE BROWN for a great example of Woody at his most typical and best -- warmly human and humorous, finding beauty in simplicity, and retaining the innocence that so many have lost. Need I say more. Here is a FOLKSINGER who truly lives up to the standards that the word implies -- here is

Woody Guthrie, the best of the best, in three of the greatest folk LP's ever pressed anywhere. They should be in everyone's collection.

WOODY GUTHRIE: BALLADS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI (Folkways 5485) One song by Pete Seeger. Plus a 36-page booklet.

Last month Folkways brought forth from its backlog a fine Leadbelly LP, and this month Moses Asch releases an excellent album by Woody Guthrie -- we should indeed be grateful to Folkways for this. BALLADS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI was recorded by Woody in 1946-47 and features "America's greatest folk poet" singing at his hard-driving and healthy best through some of his own fine compositions. All the songs concern the Sacco-Vanzetti case and there is no traditional folk material here. As is his custom, Woody often uses traditional melodies for his new words -- thus POOR HOWARD'S DEAD AND GONE becomes TWO GOOD MEN, etc. Especially pleasing to me are the marvelously singable I JUST WANT TO SING YOUR NAME and SUASSOS LANE. Woody has rarely sounded better and the album is an excellent sampler and showcase of his songwriting. Unqualifiedly recommended as a fine addition to the nation's "Woodiana."

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

Editors Jon and Paul: Congratulations and ten thousand thanks for the three LSR's sent to Woody Guthrie. We've read them from cover to cover. And, fellas, we are really happy to say -- it's great. Woody asked me to thank you for the wonderful review on Jack Elliott. He said it's about time America realized that Jack is one of the greatest of the young folk-singers. And if it weren't for Jack Elliott, I'm sure that Woody's music wouldn't be loved all over England, nor would 90 per cent of his fan mail be from England. Jack has carried the gospel of Woody far and wide through the British Isles, Europe, and Isreal. In Isreal, even though the people couldn't understand a word of what he sang, they sat entranced as he sang Woody's songs. Thanks for the kind words about Woody. He was quite delighted over the notice that he would be in England this next season. Yes! that would be something. But I'm very much afraid the rumor is only that -- a rumor. Woody is quite well. And is very pleased to learn that there are people who remember him. It's been a long time coming. But I think America is finding out that in Woodrow Wilson Guthrie they have a truly great writer. The next issue of Woody's Newsletter will be out in September -- we hope to make it better than the first one.

Thank you very much,
BOB AND SIDSEL GLEASON
for WOODY GUTHRIE
182 No. Arlington Ave.
East Orange, New Jersey

1/23/56

Gentlemen: re Leadbelly FC 7533
None of this material was ever issued
before. Yes, this was recorded late in
his life (C1942?) except Side 2 which
were the early recordings I did less
the last piece. On the first side,
these were two children's concerts.
I DO NOT DUB LEADBELLY MATERIAL or
any documentary. Shame on you. The
children are school children. The
jazz band is one of the great N. O.
Bands. And THEY WERE THERE JUST FOR
THESE CONCERTS. THE SAME BOAT BROTHER
was done with a Columbia University
audience group at a concert there.

M. ASCH
Folkways Records
New York, N. Y.

Editors' Note: We are glad to have the
above information and apologize for our
error. Yet, at the same time, we feel
that the above information SHOULD HAVE
been included with the record in the
first place. Ours was, we believe, a
logical mistake. However, mistake it was,
and, hat in hand, we humbly say we're
sorry. Many thanks for the card.

CURRENT AND CHOICE

JEAN THOMAS, THE TRAIPSIN' WOMAN:
AMERICAN FOLK SONG FESTIVAL (Folk-
ways 2358)

Authentic Southern Mt. folksong.

COUNTRY SONGS OLD AND NEW. By The
Country Gentlemen. (Folkways 2409)
Choice country and Bluegrass tunes.

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: Vol II.
(Folkways 2397)

Seeger, Cohen, and Paley shuck up
some fine corn.

BEEN HERE AND GONE. Volume 10, Music
of the South. Coll. by F. Ramsey.
(Folkways 2659)

Excellent documentary in the Folk-
ways tradition.

NEGRO FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.
Huddie Ledbetter. (Folkways 7533)

Leadbelly's only concert record-
ings -- old and "new" songs.

The Harry Oster recordings reviewed
last month are highly recommended --
though they are of less recent issue
than the records in this column.

Subscriptions — \$2.50 a year,
\$4.00 two years.

SING OUT!

The Folk Song Magazine

Now in its 10th year of publication, SING OUT is the oldest, regularly-published folk song periodical in America. Each issue contains 12-15 traditional and contemporary folk-songs, plus articles on folk music and news of the current folk song scene by such writers as Alan Lomax, Pete Seeger, Ruth Rubin, and many others. Edited by Irwin Silber; published five times yearly.

Subscription price: 1 yr. — \$2.50
2 yrs. — \$4.00

SING OUT

121 W. 47th St.
New York 36, N. Y.

"Not only the oldest, but the FOREMOST folksong magazine now being published. It seems to get better issue by issue...the last issue was superb." THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW,

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'THE ONLY MONTHLY IN THE
FOLK MUSIC FIELD'

no. 6

△
Apr 2005



THE LITTLE SANDY
30c
REVIEW

RETRY ROOM

This month's cover features Cisco Houston, one of the "old pros" of folk music. Cisco can be heard on Folkways 2480, 5717, 7020, 2010, 2013, 2346, 2022, 2042, and 7027; Vanguard 9057; and Stinson 44, 53, and 5. Cover drawing is by Jon Pankake.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

EDITOR'S COLUMN

BY PAUL NELSON & JON PANKAKE

Records, records, everywhere -- and scarce any folk music in sight. For some examples: WANDERIN' MARK DINNING on M-G-M, with a cover photo showing young Mr. Dinning dangling from the side of a boxcar and displaying his toothpasty smile and shiny new guitar; THE BOUNTY HUNTER, David Hill, on Kapp; ROLLIN' with Terry Gilkyson and the Easy Riders, Kapp 1196; and those incredible brothers created by Columbia to cover the Kingstons with RALLY 'ROUND ... Ron and Nama, following their newest Elektra release, were signed by Columbia ... After being arrested for brawling and disturbing the peace at a Skokie, Illinois,

folk party last week, Wedgely Todd was pinched two days later by Chicago cops for obstinately refusing to stop picking his Bluegrass banjo on Dearborn one afternoon. Wise up, Wedgely. This is not the road to success your many friends want to see you on ... Supposedly satirical is FOLK SONGS OF THE 21st CENTURY on the Hi Fi label ... Best news in a Long Time Dept.: Formation of the International Blues Society under the directorship of collector and discographer Chris Strachwitz. The Society will record old and new country blues artists on its own label in addition to reissuing unavailable material originally presented on such short-lived labels as Down Town, Jaxyson, and CavaTone. The membership fee of \$12.00 a year will bring members periodic research bulletins and three LP's (commercially priced at \$4.50). Write Chris Strachwitz at 17650 $\frac{1}{2}$ Navajo Trail, Los Gatos, California, for details. Sounds like the most exciting thing in a long time ... This last week, the LSR editors were invited to judge a "Folk Music Talent Contest" sponsored by a suburban Minneapolis record store. Needless to say, there was dismally little folk music presented by the competing youngsters. The influence of the Kingston Trio and their ilk is pretty hard to buck, apparently. We awarded the prize to Bill Hood, a neophyte Seeger, for the simple reason that he did the best job, to us, of presenting anything like real folk music ... Those who

don't already pick up ROGUE magazine for the girly photos might be interested in the October issue -- featuring a "special survey: FOLK MUSIC U.S.A." Bob Shelton loosely surveys the best-known performers in the field; Cynthia Gooding writes of the value of folk music to modern folk, and Oscar Brand writes, as far as we could figure out, about the amazing accomplishments of one Oscar Brand. Also included are photo-articles on Ed McCurdy, Odetta, and the Kingston Trio ... Martha Schlamme sings a well-rounded program of international song on MARTHA SCHLAMME AT TOWN HALL, Vanguard 2063 ... Upcoming on Folkways is Brownie McGhee's second volume of traditional blues. Ask for Folkways 2422 ... Tompall and the Glaser Brothers present THIS LAND on Decca 74041 ... Buck Duane is looking into an album of country fiddling on Cub Records. Watch for news soon ... LSR readers are reminded that the list of folk music on English records is now available from AGATE & COMPANY, LTD., 77 Charing Cross Road, London W. C. 2, England. New issues soon to be reviewed in LSR include EP's by Cousin Emmy, Harry and Jeanie West, the Carter Family, and an LP by the exquisite Shirley Elizabeth Collins. See Agate's ad in this issue ... Country fans will wish to note the new Earl Scruggs issue on Harmony, and SONGS OF JIMMIE RODGERS -- a tribute by Lefty Frizzel on Harmony 7241 ...

Good God! Oscar Brand has a new album of sports car songs, SPORTS CAR SONGS FOR BIG WHEELS, on Elektra. It seems to us that somebody around the office proposed that idea as a joke a few weeks ago ... Readers interested in the Peggy Seeger, Ewan MacColl, John Greenway, and A. L. Lloyd recordings on the Australian WATTLE label may write for catalogues to WATTLE RECORDINGS, 131 Cathedral Street, Sydney, New South Wales, Australia. Reviews will be coming up in LSR ... Our contemporary Jimmie Rodgers, the young fellow that, according to the copyright office, wrote FROGGIE WENT A-COURTING, has a new folk issue on Roulette ... Concertish Salli Terri offers SONGS OF THE AMERICAN LAND on Capitol 8522 ... SONNY AND BROWNIE SING AND PLAY (Choice 100) reportedly contains CINDY and OLD MACDONALD HAD A FARM ... Willie Wright says I SING FOLK SONGS on Concert-Disc Records ... The Scottish MacPHERSON SINGERS can be heard on CALEDONIA, their new Elektra release ... As usual, we must wind up the column with the news that the Little Sandy's coffers, insatiable as ever, are still crying for money. We need only 333,333 subscribers to become millionaires. This is not why we are in business, but it would be nicer than working for a living. A big year's subscription is still a low, low \$3. And we are still at 3220 Park Ave. South, Minneapolis 7, Minn. See you next month with another astounding issue.

CISCO HOUSTON SINGS SONGS OF THE OPEN ROAD (Folkways 2480)

That grand and glorious clan of folk singers who first brought folk music to the city and to city recordings some 20 years ago now presents a curious and diverse picture to the record buyer. Pete Seeger, of course, has gone onward and upward -- maturing from a fine performer of traditional material into our country's greatest concerteer and songleader. But it is not a happy picture for his one time compatriots. Josh White now basks in the moneyed glow of the expense account set, and Burl Ives has become the darling of the suburban matrons. Woody Guthrie, Bess and Butch Hawes, Hally Wood, and others have either retired completely or are very inactive in the recording field. And Leadbelly, though his great heart lives on via his numerous recordings, has gone to his reward. This leaves Cisco -- and what can one say about him? He seems to be standing at some sort of crossroads -- his position undefined and his route uncertain. A recent attempt to introduce him to the folkum market, orchestrated and refined, was not well met. Attempts by Decca and others to thrust him into the country-western field likewise failed. Now, in SONGS OF THE OPEN ROAD, he returns to the folk style he began with-

-- union, hobo, topical, and ramblin' songs sung in the Jimmie Rodgers-Woody Guthrie guitar and vocal style that once made him superb. It is dismaying to find that he has so little to offer. Neither traditionalist nor folknik will find anything here that will interest him. Cisco just can't bring these full-blooded songs to life -- and there are mild indications of a satirical treatment a la Ed McCurdy. The attitude and style are very vague indeed. One certainly can't blame a man for not being the singer he was 15 years ago -- but neither can one condone the Ernie Ford phrasing sometimes heard on this record. Fans of Cisco's who have stuck with him through thick and thin and Vanguard will find songs they will like (my favorites: CRYDERVILLE JAIL, MULE SKINNER BLUES, EAST VIRGINIA BLUES, PIE IN THE SKY), but others will bemoan the fact that Cisco no longer sounds believable as a Southwestern singer -- and has not yet worked out an appropriate substitute style.

QUOTABLE:

"I reckon some folks figure it's a compliment to be called 'broadminded'. Back home, 'broadminded' is just another way of sayin' a feller's too lazy to form an opinion."

WILL ROGERS

JOHN LEE HOOKER: THE BLUES (Crown 5157)

The twelve cuts on this LP are all reissues of singles that originally appeared on the Modern label. They show Hooker in an earlier stage of his development than any other available LP, excepting the one on Audio-Lab. The majority of titles feature just Hooker and his guitar, although there is one double-recording of Hooker singing a duet with himself, and another with organ and vibes. These are early recordings -- I'd say late 40's or early 50's -- so they are a bit more primitive than the things he's doing now. It's interesting -- Hooker is one blues artist who has improved with time: compare WEEPING WILLOW on this album with the one on Riverside to see the difference. Best cuts are WHISTLING AND MOANING and ANYBODY SEEN MY BABY. In general, this is a good album -- in a day when you can get BADMAN'S BLUNDER by you-know-who for a buck -- the \$1.49 price tag makes this a must for Hooker fans and a "should" for blues students. My previous experience has been that Crown LP's don't last too long so you might make your first play a tape copy one. The cover photo and liner notes are bad.
(Reviewer: Dave Glover)

Vanguard Records says "LSR is in a rut!"
See page 16 for the full story.

COUSIN EMMY AND HER KINFOLK: KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN BALLADS, Volumes I and II.
(Brunswick oe 9258, 9259) English records.

Available only in England, these excellent albums are reissues of the original American Decca sides (long out-of-print) of the singer Alan Lomax has called "a banjo queen from the hills of Kentucky" -- Cousin Emmy. Does their overseas reissue indicate that Decca (which controls the vast Vocalion and Brunswick catalogs of pre-war country records) considers re-release of its folk items more feasible in England than in America? At any rate, these two 45 rpm records are well worth the moderate cost of transatlantic purchase. Emmy is a marvelously pure singer -- ranging easily from sweet to sour to lonesome to funny as the great mountain singers can. Her banjo-picking is a smooth-as-silk style of frailing strongly reminiscent of the playing of Uncle Dave Macon, and fits well with the instrumental backing of the "Kinfolks" -- git-tar slapping, harmonica honking, shouting, and foot-stomping. Though most of the eight songs are rhythm numbers, Emmy shines best on PRETTY LITTLE MISSY OUT IN THE GARDEN -- balladeering worthy of almost any heard in the Library of Congress archives. Also good are the galloping, banjofied LONESOME ROAD BLUES, WISH I WAS A SINGLE GIRL, VIRGINIA GALS,

JOHNNY BOOKER, BOWLING GREEN, and LOST JOHN ("Let's ketch 'im, Bill"). The incessant shouting of the "Kinfolks" became a bit tiresome to me, however, on FREE LITTLE BIRD. But these EP's are a must for those who fancy their mountain music caught between tradition and the deep blue sea of recorded old-time country music.

STRING ALONG WITH THE KINGSTON TRIO
(Capitol 1407)

The current vogue seems to be to "borrow" Bob Gibson songs. He does them much better. Abominations like BUDDY BETTER GET ON DOWN THE LINE, a re-write of the Pete Seeger: Pete Steele: Dave Macon versions, also don't help the group. It is now a railroad song and a sort of teenage love song -- both! Now don't get me wrong, I like ethnicness as well as the next guy, but ...
(Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

For the best in "free-wheeling iconoclasm," subscribe now to THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW. Back issues now available only on LSR #5. All other issues are completely sold out. Upcoming articles by Moses Asch, John Greenway, and Archie Green plus complete listings and reviews of all American folk music and some fun with folkum.

FOLKWAYS

The Nashville

Sit-In Story



Folkways FH 5590



Conceived
Coordinated
directed by
Guy Carawan



RECORDS

CURRENT AND CHOICE
on the English Record Scene
Current and Choice
ON THE ENGLISH RECORD SCENE

Alan Lomax: ALAN LOMAX SINGS GREAT AMERICAN BALLADS (HMV CLP 1192) 12" LP
Alan Lomax: ALAN LOMAX SINGS (Nixa NJE 1055) 7" EP
and more ---

Peggy Seeger and Guy Carawan: AMERICA AT PLAY (HMV CLP 1174) 12" LP
Peggy Seeger, Guy Carawan, Isla Cameron: ORIGINS OF SKIFFLE
(Nixa NJE 1043) 7" EP

Peggy, Penny, and Barbara Seeger: SHINE LIKE A STAR (Topic TOP 38) 7" EP
COME ALONG JOHN (Topic TOP 18) 7" EP
Peggy Seeger: PEGGY SEEGER (Topic 10T9) 10" LP

Jack Elliott: JACK TAKES THE FLOOR (Topic 10T15) 10" LP
THE RAMBLING BOYS (Topic 10T14) with Derroll Adams 10" LP
WOODY GUTHRIE'S BLUES (Topic T5) 8" LP

still more ---

Shirley Collins: SWEET ENGLAND (Argo RG 150) 12" LP
THE FOGGY DEW (Collector JEB 3) 7" EP
SINGS ENGLISH SONGS (Collector JEB 5) 7" EP

The Carter Family: MOUNTAIN MUSIC (Brunswick oe 9168) 7" EP
Cousin Emmy: KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN BALLADS, Volumes I and II
(Brunswick oe 9258, 9259) 7" EP's

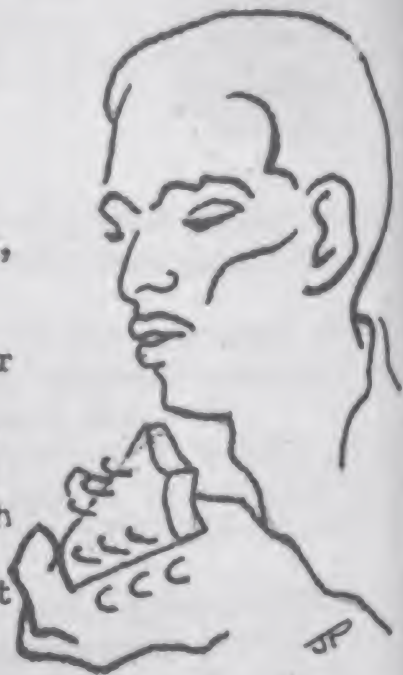
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BILL McADOO SINGS
(Folkways 2448)
Accompanied on banjo
by Pete Seeger.

In these days of commercialized folkum, orchestrated chain gangs, and Negro singers of the caliber and authenticity of Harry Belafonte, Leon Bibb, Casey Anderson, Brock Peters, and Josh White, it is indeed refreshing to see that such a phenomenon as a Bill McAdoo can still happen. For here is a 23-year-old, college-educated Negro who is actually trying to sing (and write) folk music in a vocal and instrumental style that is in the tradition and spirit of the music of his people. Here is a young Negro with a cause — the freedom of his people — and a fiery desire to do something about it the best way he can: in word and song. And — let's come right out and say it — here is the best AND most important professional (and by this I mean he's not a "folk") Negro folksinger in years!!!!

The songs in this album are mostly blues-based McAdoo compositions having to do with the trouble in the South, al-



though there are also traditional songs such as JOHN HENRY, DARLING, and FARE THEE WELL, and a beautiful McAdoo love song, 800 MILES. The Jim Crow songs are tremendously moving experiences -- McAdoo sings them in a fiercely-driving, harsh, rough, angry style and you cannot help but believe that here is a man who believes in every word he is singing. He is defending a cause, a cause every American should be concerned with, and using the lusty earthiness and powerful emotional urgency of the blues as his tools. Listen to I DON'T WANT NO JIM CROW COFFEE or WALK ON ALABAMA and you'll see what I mean. He fares almost equally well on the traditional material, especially the hard-driving JOHN HENRY, where he tells Pete, at the end of a particularly moving chorus, to "hit it again!" McAdoo's JOHN HENRY, incidentally, is both traditional and his own, since he's incorporated several verses into it. Seeger's banjo, which beats any orchestra, is superb throughout the LP and adds immeasurably to each song. This is apparent in JOHN HENRY and even more so in a song McAdoo wrote when he was scare 18 -- 800 MILES. The song -- "it describes the route which N. Y. Central trains take from Detroit to N. Y., and is basically a love song" -- shows McAdoo's great talents as a writer and composer: it catches the scope
(continued page 22)

MANNY SOLOMON SPEAKS OUT!

or: A Folk Outlaw Shoots From the Hip

Dear Guys: I think your magazine is in a rut, and should do something about it. Free-wheeling iconoclasm is OK, so is shooting from the hip whenever you spot a folk outlaw, but it gets terribly dull after a while. LSR is becoming a glib magazine, whose opinions are readily predictable, produced according to formula.

The mag has attracted a lot of attention, and deservedly so, because its good to have an airing of views and a firm taking of sides. But it's not good to take deliberately eccentric positions in order to arouse discussions, nor is it worthy of LSR to cater to the ingrained prejudices of its audience by intolerant judgements of serious artists. A well-known classical record critic used to do much the same kind of thing, and gathered a host of know-nothing disciples to whom his every unsupported word was law. He decided Berlioz was in and Beethoven was out, so that was that. You decide that Roosevelt Charles puts Robeson and Marian Anderson to shame, and that's that. "Alas... Marian Anderson" is your line.

Pretty intolerant, don't you think? So Charles gets back "to the roots," but what about the tree? Would you wipe out the

entire tradition of spiritual performance started by the Jubilee Singers, nourished by Burleigh, Dett and others, culminating in Hayes, Robeson, Anderson?

If your answer is yes, it's time you did a little thinking about folk music. It's not a subject you can confine in a space six by two and a half. Woody said its "just as big to talk about as this whole human race;" you can't wipe out the whole development of folk music and its performance practise just because you happen to dig country blues, bluegrass and a couple of other valid areas of folk music U.S. variety. There is an infinite number of valid ways of performing folk songs; who are you to tell a concert singer to keep off your grass? Is it your grass more than Marian Anderson's? I can just hear an 18th century folk-fan telling Bach to stop arranging Lutheran chorales, it's not authentic. So none of us like hoked-up arrangements (!!! Editors). So what's hoked-up? Every accompaniment, be it guitar, banjo, hand-clapping, axe-chopping or 101 strings, is an arrangement. Some have validity, some don't, but it takes a separate study of each to determine which is aesthetically right, and which is hoked-up. A little more analysis, reasoning and respect for a field which is bigger than all of us, would help make LSR an important publication on the folk scene.

Above all, don't go commercial. Commercial for LSR is giving its audience only what it already believes, and wants to have

confirmed. Have fun.

Manny Solomon
VANGUARD RECORDS
New York, N. Y.

AN OPEN LETTER TO MANNY SOLOMON

Dear Mr. Solomon: If Jean Ritchie were to play CARMEN or Mike Seeger to sing the lead in DON GIOVONNI, what do you think the response would be from serious opera critics? Or, if Orbray Ramsey would appear as guest soloist with the New York Philharmonic and Jack Elliott tried to conduct THE NEW WORLD SYMPHONY, what would THE TIMES say in its review?

Is it so ridiculous then for us to dislike a Leon Bibb, a Paul Robeson, or a Marian Anderson when they put themselves into the folk field, announce that they are going to sing folk songs, and then procede to put themselves in the ridiculous position our folk artists do in the lead paragraph? The point is that Ritchie, Seeger, Ramsey, etc., have spent their whole lives in folk music, learning the intricacies of an art which TO THE INITIATED is fully as complex as opera or classical music. They could not be expected to perform music outside their field and have the good sense not to try it. Your people do not have that good sense. They are classically-trained musicians, and, as such, they are excellent. As folksingers, they are

something else again. Alan Lomax, Fred Ramsey, and others have said (and correctly) that folk music cannot even be written down or contained in the classical European musical forms, and, of course, cannot be performed within these limits. Yet, your people try it all the time and then come out with the smug conception that this is actually better than the real folk music because it is more musical and is designed for "modern folk" or some other bilge like that. For Bibb, Robeson, Anderson, etc., to sing real folk music, they would have to do the impossible -- they would have to throw out or deny all their musical training and do things that would be completely unmusical to them -- crack their voices, sluff or hold notes, ignore the strict musical time of a piece, etc. -- things that would make anyone trained in classical music shudder. This is what Alan Lomax calls the folksingers' BLAS -- and it is something that a Leon Bibb or a Paul Robeson will never have. We are talking about folk music now, Mr. Solomon, and some of the people we hear on Vanguard Records have no business in the field!

We do not "cater to the ingrained prejudices of our audience" in our reviews. Indeed, we didn't even know

they had any "ingrained prejudices." Nor do we "deliberately take eccentric positions in order to arouse discussion." It seems that honest folk reviews arouse more discussion than any dishonest ones we could think of anyway. We simply state and defend the simple idea that folk music should and CAN only be performed by people in the folk tradition or by people who have taken the trouble to learn it. The fact that such an opinion is regarded as "deliberately eccentric," "glib," and "intolerant" by people such as you indicates the prevailing ignorance of true traditional music.

And as for that crack about Woody describing folk music as "just as big to talk about as this whole human race," I'm sure he didn't have Vanguard Records or your argument in mind when he said it. If you'd care to ask Woody what he thinks of some of your orchestrated releases -- say the Cisco Houston LP, for instance -- we certainly wouldn't be afraid to print his answer. Did Cisco enjoy the arrangement of DARK AS A DUNGEON? Does he feel that Okun's chorus and the pop treatment of the song was what was needed to make it meaningful, give it "validity," and make it "aesthetically right?" After a "seperate study" of the arrangement and many careful re-readings of your letter, we still decided it was "hoked-up."

"Alas Marian Anderson" is not our line: it is yours. Our line read "alas, THAT FINE SINGER Marian Anderson." We do not dislike Marian Anderson as a singer nor do we think that she is not a serious artist. She certainly is. But she is not a folksinger (and, I'm sure, she knows this -- it's just that you don't) and in folk music, she is not important. Just because she has a great voice doesn't automatically make her a great folksinger, as you seem to think. Roosevelt Charles is much more important. He represents the roots, and we just happen to think that the roots are more important than the leaves of the tree. The leaves of a tree (and Vanguard has an awful lot of leaves) blow away insignificantly, but the roots of a Roosevelt Charles should and will remain since they are real and have lasting life and value. Your people may be serious artists, but their folk music cannot be taken seriously.

We're pretty sick and tired of your brand of "snob-appeal folkum," Mr. Solomon. We're afraid that it and the Kingston Trio-type folkum are going to displace real folk music -- people love the idea of "easy-listening" folk music and you at Vanguard are certainly doing your share to give it to them. Let us hope they choke on it, Mr. Solomon. You can bet your boots that we at Little Sandy will do all we can to make sure they do. It was very enjoyable

to answer your letter. Our "predictable" magazine will continue to do its CONSISTENT best in reviewing folk records.

Sincerely,
PAUL NELSON
JON PANKAKE
Editors

~~~~~

(continued from page 15)  
of the land, the poetic feeling for America, and (more difficult) the feeling of a personal emotional situation. It is indeed such a triumph for McAdoo and such an intensely perfect personal expression, I can hardly imagine anyone else singing it at all or, at any rate, doing a good job of it. Pete's banjo on this song is exactly right. It is one of the most incredibly beautiful jobs of accompaniment I have ever heard.

Here then is Bill McAdoo -- one of the most important folk song discoveries in years. Let us hope we hear much, much more from him.

~~~~~

Folkways News: Upcoming soon will be THE NEW BRITON GAZETTE (Folkways 8732) with Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger. Also, SONGS OF WILLIE DIXON AND MEMPHIS SLIM (Folkways 2385). Watch for them.

CURRENT AND CHOICE

WOODY GUTHRIE: BALLADS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI (Folkways 5485)

One of the true giants of folk music singing his own songs.

JEAN THOMAS, THE TRAIPSIN' WOMAN: AMERICAN FOLK SONG FESTIVAL (Folkways 2358)

Authentic Southern Mt. folksong.

COUNTRY SONGS OLD AND NEW. By The Country Gentlemen. (Folkways 2409)

Choice country and Bluegrass tunes.

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: Vol II. (Folkways 2397)

Seeger, Cohen, and Paley shuck up some fine corn.

BEEN HERE AND GONE. Volume 10, Music of the South. Coll. by F. Ramsey. (Folkways 2659)

Excellent documentary in the Folkways tradition.

NEGRO FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. Huddie Ledbetter. (Folkways 7533)

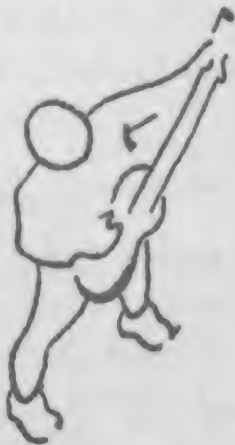
Leadbelly's only concert recordings -- old and "new" songs.

The Harry Oster, Woody Guthrie, and Leadbelly Folk-Lyric and Stinson LP's reviewed in LSR's 4 & 5 are highly recommended although they are not current releases.

LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

3220 Park Avenue South
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LSR reviews and lists all records having to do with American and English folk song. \$3.00 for 12 big issues.



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POETRY ROOM
THE LITTLE SANDY
REVIEW

This month's cover features Mike Seeger, one-third of America's best folk group, the New Lost City Ramblers. Mike's had a varied recording career, appearing with the Ramblers on Vanguard 9063 and Folkways 2396, 2397, 5264, 5717, and 7064; with brother Pete on Folkways 2512; and with the Seeger Family on Folkways 2005. He has also recorded a number of LP's for Folkways -- 2315, 2318, 2314, 2409, 3526 -- among them the Stoneman Family and Elizabeth Cotten. Cover is by guest cover artist, Barbara Rauhala of Richmond, Calif. She also did the drawing on pages 16-17.

EDITORS' COLUMN

EDITORS' COLUMN

EDITORS' COLUMN

By Jon Pankake & Paul Nelson

Have you seen those "party couples" various show-biz columnists have been running (Barry and Ella Fitzgerald, etc.)? Well, the Little Sandy is horning in. For our special big NOW THAT WE'RE FAMOUS PARTY (thanks to SING OUT!), the invitation list reads: Lee and Gabby Hay(s);

(continued on page 29)

RECORD REVIEWS

SHIRLEY ELIZABETH COLLINS: SWEET ENGLAND
(Argo RG 150) An English Record.

To those who have heard her sensational Folkways LP (3564), Miss Collins will need no introduction. This, her newest release, subtitled "a collection of Love Songs and Ballads from Southern England," is as faultless a tour de force as was her American LP. Again aiding Miss Collins' own banjo accompaniment is the expert trio of musicians that contributed so much to her American record debut -- John Hasted, banjo; and Guy Carawan and Ralph Rinzler, guitars. To judge from some of the selections heard on this album, Miss Collins is continuing her experimental breeding of American and British folk arts with a verve and an audacity the wistful image she projects would certainly belie. For here she has taken the thoroughly-Americanized good old mountain murder ballad, OMIE WISE, and sung it in her own traditional English style -- with a rambling hillbilly banjo accompaniment! Similar treatment is given PRETTY SARO and Jean Ritchie's Cumberland variant of CHARLIE. The success of these ventures would make the term "creative transformation" actually more appropriate than "experiment" -- and establish Miss Collins as an artist to reckon with, and certainly one that must be heard by everyone. In recommending this young artist --

possessor of one of the inherently great ballad voices of our time and mistress of a thousand and one nuances that are rare indeed in the singing of a youngster scarce 23 years old -- this reviewer can do no more than quote a segment of Alan Lomax's liner notes: "...This album catches (Miss Collins) at the peak of her youthful power..only rarely have I met a folksinger who (is) able to record this shyest and sweetest of music with no loss of subtlety or emotion..in ten years I believe she will be a major artist, but here is the wistful and tender magic of the young girl, that is beyond art."

SONNY TERRY AND BROWNIE MCGHEE:
DOWN HOME BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1002)
BLUES IS A STORY (World-Pacific 1294)

Both of these recent releases appear on labels primarily devoted to jazz, and both seem to be aimed at the jazz fan who suddenly has found that it's hip to "dig the roots." Some of the titles are done on both LP's and the main difference seems to be in the consistencies of performance -- on the Prestige album both Sonny and Brownie are in a more consistently-brilliant blues mood, while on the World-Pacific, Brownie is playing and singing in a sophisticated, almost pseudo-blues style. His voice lacks emotion; he sounds tired

of the whole thing.

Each album has its virtues, and each has its faults. Most of the trouble on the Prestige LP can be laid at the doorstep of the A&R man -- whoever decided to have them do FREIGHT TRAIN ought to be shot -- even Sonny's harp can't save it. The whole number is embarrassing. Also, why have Brownie do the vocal on LOUISE, a song that is one of Sonny's best and one that he does superbly? And, why didn't Brownie keep his mouth shut on FOX CHASE instead of trying to do an unnecessary explanatory narrative? However, there are good cuts too -- STRANGER HERE, BABY HOW LONG, and BACK TO NEW ORLEANS (titled BABY PLEASE DON'T GO on the Pacific album). The difficulties on the latter LP stem mostly from Brownie, although one cut, KEYS TO THE HIGHWAY, is interesting due to the up-dated lyrics he has added -- "I eat my breakfast in California/Eat my dinner in ol' Carolina/I'm the highway-walkin' man you'll ever find." These words tell the story of two modern wandering folksingers traveling by jet from engagement to engagement. The main points of interest on World-Pacific are Sonny's great vocal and harp on LOUISE, and three instrumental cuts -- NEW HARMONICA BREAKDOWN (called HARMONICA STOMP on Folkways), BLOWIN' THE BLUES (usually called HOOTIN' THE BLUES on other albums), and BROWNIE'S GUITAR BLUES (a long cut in the

"jooking" style of jump guitar-and-harp blues you'd hear on the jukeboxes in the '40's). The songs showcase Sonny's tremendous control over the little \$2.25 harp he blows.

Both albums are free from technical interference (although an echo-chamber is used on some cuts on the Prestige LP) and both are recommended for those who like easy blues. Real dyed-in-wool fans of Sonny should listen twice.

(Reviewer: Dave Glover)

SONGS OF MEMPHIS SLIM AND WILLIE DIXON
(Folkways 2385)

Folkways, which already has a number of outstanding jazz albums in its catalog, has produced a superb album of the city blues: the meeting place between the old country blues (a form of true folk music) and city-bred jazz. Both of the performers are respected veterans: Slim is a pianist who already has fine boogie and honky tonk albums on Folkways, and Dixon is a bassist who has worked with nearly all the great Chicago blues singers of the past 15 years; and has written innumerable blues songs. This city blues is an old and honored style. Leroy Carr and Champion Jack Dupree, both pianist-singers, performed in this style; Joe Turner brought it to

the world of jazz, and Big Bill Broonzy sang it on many of his Chicago recordings. These artists bring out the best in the style, avoiding most of its pitfalls. There are many delights on the record, including a medley of three songs about Kansas City (one of which, in a surprisingly authentic performance by another singer, was a "pop" hit in 1959). Little Brother Montgomery's old piano tune VICKSBURG BLUES turns up as 44 BLUES, and there is a moving NASHVILLE PEN and a wonderful CHICAGO HOUSE RENT PARTY. For good measure, a nice JOHN HENRY and STEWBALL are included. Musically, the album is a great success. But there is one glaring defect -- there are no notes at all in this album, just a transcription (full of mistakes) of what is said and sung on the record. There is no way of knowing even who sings and plays what on the record. (As far as I can make out: Slim, piano and most of the vocals; Dixon, bass and a few vocals). This is a very strange omission for Folkways, and, in a \$5.95 album, it is absolutely inexcusable.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JOAN BAEZ, BILL WOOD, TED ALEVIZOS:
FOLKSINGERS 'ROUND HARVARD SQUARE
(Veritas 1)

Lee Hays has stated (and correctly) that the modern LP folk record is only the newest development in the traditional oral folk process -- and that youngsters who learn

songs from such records are as valid a part of the process as those privileged to learn from experienced traditional singers. And Alan Lomax has said that the best way to learn from records is for the aspiring amateur singer to get hold of recordings of the masters of traditional music and to imitate the sounds heard. Then, when the amateur has acquired a thorough background in traditional musicianship, he will be ready to create and express himself within the bounds of the musical form. The emergence of such young modern folk music geniuses as Peggy Seeger more than bears out the validity of these theories. But there are numerous talented and eager young people who, being indifferent to or ignorant of the intricacies of traditional music, leap to devote their energy to learning from records that are either unpleasant mishmashes of "artistic" and folk musical styles and forms, or down-and-out commercialized and vulgarized folk music aimed at collecting the buck of the record-buying public-at-large -- neither of which has any value as educational or historical documentaries of American traditional music. All of which brings us to the Veritas record.

It is not bad that these youngsters are imitating from records -- it's just that the records they have chosen are high-grade folkum and the work spent studying them has produced nothing

of value. It is pathetic to think of the amount of time and talent Joan Baez has wasted learning letter perfect Odetta's ludicrous version of SAIL AWAY LADIES; or J. J. Niles' extravagant corruption of a fine American ballad, BLACK IS THE COLOR. How much better her lovely young voice would sound singing the untheatrical and natural Kentucky BLACK, and how much more appealing would be her innate spirit channelled into the un-self-conscious Macon SAIL AWAY! Bill Wood has painfully, one might say religiously, learned Josh White's jazzy guitar style down to the last nuance. The height of absurdity reached on the record is an attempt by Wood and Baez to imitate Josh and Sam Gary singing SO SOON IN THE MORNING. Just where Miss Baez thinks she fits in that number is not clear to me.

Those who, like this reviewer, will buy the record in hopeful anticipation of hearing the same Baez of Newport '59 will be dismally disappointed. The mediocrity of her ten offerings, rising from an indecisive style and vague accompaniment, prompts one to surmise that her sensational debut performance at Newport was more than a little due to the expert musicianship and showmanship of her partner, gallant Job Gibson, who chivalrously devoted his talents to giving her the whole show.

As for the superficial entertaining of head-Raunch Hand Wood -- who is probably

the singing sensation of his frat house -- it can hardly be called folksinging.

Ted Alevizos is by far the most accomplished singer of the three. His classical training and leaping tenor voice have led him to choose the art-song style for his own, and the coherence and taste of his presentations indicate a well-thought-out, but not folk, style. He interestingly transforms the Lomax-collected Blue Ridge love ballad DO COME BACK AGAIN (called REJECTED LOVER here) into quite a pleasant art song.

But, except for Alevizos, the album is a sometimes amusing and often embarrassing excursion into folkniksville -- and a trip to your nearest college campus will undoubtedly enable you to hear "folksinging" as good or better than that heard 'round Harvard Square. (Reviewer: Edmund Gilbertson)

LORI HOLLAND: IRISH FOLK SONGS FOR WOMEN (Folkways 3518)

This album represents the classic case of our day and age: the city-folksinger gone astray through lack of contact, lack of understanding, or lack of something from the material being presented. Lori Holland has

been singing for 10 years (with voice lessons from Ed McCurdy) and yet is no closer to her songs now than New York City is to Ireland. Rarely, if ever, have I encountered a folksinger with so complete a lack of BLAS as Mrs. Holland. She displays an "overtrained" voice reminiscent of Cynthia Gooding (although more shrill and harsh) -- and lilts and bounces like a vocal robot through 14 Irish folk(?) songs with hardly a care in the world what the words mean as long as the trills are right. It is rather like listening to a folksong recital by automation -- and not a very good recital at that. There is an appalling lack of anything real or emotional throughout the entire LP: everything is icily "correct." Kenneth Goldstein's notes are good, and the only other thing I found at all interesting in the album was IF I WERE A BLACKBIRD -- and that simply because of its similarities to WAGONER'S LAD. I hope this LP is not indicative of all of Mrs. Holland's work.

EVERYBODY SING! Volume 4: International Songs. (Riverside Wonderland 1421)

Here then is the fourth volume of Riverside's \$1.98 EVERYBODY SING! "folksongs for children" quartet. It still seems more of a "sampler" set than a "sing-along," but the low price and impressive list of folk artists make it an ideal introductory set to all kinds of folk music. Also announced this month by Riverside is a sort

of companion set to this one: 3 LP's called FOLK SONGS FOR LITTLE COWBOYS, FOLK SONGS FOR LITTLE SAILORS, and FOLK SONGS FROM THE CHILDREN'S ZOO: all at \$1.98, and featuring such notables as Peggy Seeger, Bob Gibson, Ed McCurdy, Billy Faier, Jean Ritchie, and all the Riverside rostrum of folk talent. This is a lot of folk music for a little money. Let me stress, however, that the avid collector will find NOTHING NEW on any of these LP's -- all the songs have been garnered from previous Riverside LP's. The latter set of albums are numbered 1423, 1424, and 1425.

LESTER FLATT & EARL SCRUGGS with the Foggy Mountain Boys (Mercury 20542)

A gentle warning to readers: in recommending this record to "country music" fans, LSR uses the term to designate those fortunates whose hearts are innocent and whose tear ducts lie close to the surface. Those neophytes who have listened to the Ramblers and the Folkways Anthology once each and thereby dub themselves "country" fans cannot possibly appreciate the beautiful corniness of such songs as BABY BLUE EYES, PAIN IN MY HEART, BACK TO THE CROSS, IS IT TOO LATE NOW, etc. -- in other words, the real, uncut, and unadulterated Grand Ol' Opry McCoy. Flatt & Scruggs' WSM radio sponsor,

Martha White Mills, says: "We think their brand of country music is like Martha White Flour: 'GOODNESS GRACIOUS! IT'S GOOD!'" LSR agrees. 'Nuff said.

BUD & TRAVIS IN CONCERT
(Liberty 11001) A 2-LP set.

An interesting situation exists in the record business right now -- perhaps the two hottest categories on LP record are COMEDY and FOLKUM: the Kingston Trio, Mort Sahl, the Brothers Four, Shelley Berman, etc. These are the records that are selling. Along come Bud and Travis and they see this. What's the logical thing for them to do? Right! Combine the two -- sick comedy and slick folksinging (or is it the other way around?) -- and hope for smashing commercial success. Perhaps this is the reason for the 2-LP set -- it's one-for-you, one-for-me all the way. Under these circumstances, one must judge them two ways: as folksingers, they are not very good; and, as comedians, they are not very good either. Representative lines: "I'm gonna sing you perhaps the most beautiful love song ever written" and "We'd like to do something a little different -- we'd like to milk a reindeer." Take your pick.

In "their first MAJOR concert," they perform the standard folknik repertoire, complete with DELIA, JOHN B, and that most

mis-sung of all folksongs, JOHNNY I HARDLY KNEW YE, a tragi-comic song, Brechtian in tone, that is invariably sung in dead seriousness and hushed reverence. This makes the song ridiculous: it is a "laughing lament," full of bitter humor and exaggeration. To sing it in holy piety (as everyone does) is the equivalent of believing every word of something like MACK THE KNIFE.

In case anybody cares, you can buy this set for just \$4.98, which Liberty claims is a bargain. We're not so sure.

THE FOLK BLUES OF JOHN LEE HOOKER
(Riverside 12-838)

THAT'S MY STORY: JOHN LEE HOOKER
SINGS THE BLUES (Riverside 12-321)

JOHN LEE HOOKER: TRAVELIN' (VeeJay 1023)

The two Riverside albums represent a highpoint in Hooker's career: after 15 years as a recording artist, he has finally been recorded the way HE wants to be. His first recordings in the '40's were primitive and harsh, but, later, of necessity, his style became more sophisticated -- A&R men want to sell records first and document folk blues second. Hence his recordings for Modern are full of background chaos: drums, piano, sax, organ, and practically anything else

FOLK-LYRIC RECORDING CO.

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Baton Rouge, La.



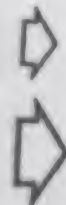
*Peggy Seeger: Songs
for Banjo Addicts.*

*Ewan MacColl: The
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*Dominic Behan: Irish
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AVAILABLE FOR CONCERTS: WRITE LSR

that sounded nervous and noisy. Later, for VeeJay, he cut a few sides in an older style -- just he and his guitar, rhythm being provided by his foot stomping on a piece of plywood. Yet, even these sides seemed to have that sharply-commercial sound the current blues market seems to demand.

In 1959, Bill Grauer, head of Riverside and long a Hooker fan, contacted John Lee and planned to have him to an album of songs associated with Leadbelly. However, it turned out that Hooker wasn't familiar with the songs as such. What developed was the FOLK BLUES LP. Hooker deliberately turned to an older blues style -- he plays alone with a non-electric guitar. The result is his best recording to date AND his emergence as a fine folk artist. He did traditional blues -- BUNDLE UP AND GO, CHURCH BELL TONE, HOW LONG, I ROWED A LITTLE BOAT, etc. Also included were songs that Hooker had picked up on his vagabond trips around the U.S. and shaped into his own style. Some of these have been recorded on other labels -- BLACK SNAKE, WOBBLING BABY, etc. -- but they are done best on this LP. Hooker has improved with age, not deteriorated or gone the commercial route that far too many other blues artists have. His guitar is as fine and distinctive as ever (he doesn't need 30 watts to sound good), and his vocal style is rougher,

lower, and more personally intense on these sides than on previous recordings. At times, he sings with a fierceness reminiscent of Tommy McClennan. Listen to SHE'S LONG, SHE'S TALL, SHE WEEPS LIKE A WILLOW TREE and the talking TUPELO BLUES for an idea of the range of his vocal talent.

The second album, THAT'S MY STORY, is a sort of companion to the first -- a Volume 2 of Hooker. The songs here are practically all ones that Hooker has written -- they are modern blues done in an older style. On some cuts, he's accompanied by bass and drums. DON'T GO AWAY! They stay unobtrusive and help (as the notes say) to take some of the rhythmic responsibility off of Hooker, allowing him to develop more intricate melodic figures. On this LP, the prominent feature is Hooker's voice -- his guitar remains mostly a low background drone. The songs here are more introspective and brooding than on the other LP -- hence also more autobiographical. His voice drops to almost inaudibility; he hums and moans a phrase, and you know that this is the real blues in all their raw and unpolished reality. Listen to the emotional plea, COME ON AND SEE ABOUT ME, and the almost wierd I'M WANDERING. Hooker displays here the tremendous conviction and ability

which enabled him to survive as an R&B singer, and to come through with real feeling even when backed by freight-train rhythm sections. Now, he goes further, and does folk blues, taking the best of R&B with him. Take for an example the compelling beat on I NEED SOME MONEY. Another interesting cut is DEMOCRAT MAN, a social-political commentary -- something of a rarity in Negro blues. ONE OF THESE DAYS is a spiritual, done in blues style. And, to cap it off, there's THAT'S MY STORY, a musical autobiography with the line, "I left home when I was only fourteen..." That's Hooker's story -- wandering around the country, singing here and there, going hungry, going it alone -- and now it seems that all this experience has come to a head and has been poured into these albums.

Try FOLK BLUES as a starter, and, if you like that, go on to THAT'S MY STORY. You won't be sorry.

TRAVELIN'

This is Hooker's seventh LP; his second for VeeJay. There is a marked difference between it and his first one. Since that was released, he has gained considerable recognition as a fine folk-blues artist (including a stint on TV), and that the VeeJay people have taken cognizance of this fact is apparent. The basis for the LP is the traveling nature of his songs, and not the hackneyed "Why'd you leave me baby" type of lyric usually found on commercial blues recordings. And there is less

interference from a house band -- Hooker is accompanied here by only drums and a bass (?). He uses his electric guitar throughout (folk fans may not appreciate this) and does quite well with it.

Lightning Hopkins is the only other singer I know who similarly "uses" the acoustic qualities of the electric guitar to his own advantage without being buried. Some of the best cuts are the lonely I'M A STRANGER, the "hypnotic" and driving RUN ON, the savagely sexual SOLID SENDER, and I CAN'T BELIEVE (on which he effectively uses tremolo guitar backing). Notes are by Nat Hentoff, and the whole album is attractively and intelligently put together. Let us hope the VeeJay people continue in this same vein -- they have some fine talent in their stables and most of them deserve better than what they've been getting. Blues fans will like this LP and folk fans should give it try too. The cover drawing is the best I've ever seen on a VeeJay album.

(Reviewer: Dave Glover)

HOWDY FORRESTER: FANCY FIDDLIN' COUNTRY STYLE (Cub 8008)

Country fiddlin', an aspect of rural art largely neglected by the folk recording boom (compared to the numerous excellent banjo records available) is not done any sort of justice on this album. The liner notes state that

Forrester "can saw a breakdown one minute and then make chills tingle your spine with a haunting gypsy melody or figuratively whisk you to Vienna with his rendition of a waltz." Which is just what's wrong with him. The genuine country tunes (SALLY GOODIN, LEATHER BRITCHES, etc.) are bland and cold, and atrocities like CLARINET POLKA keep sneaking in from left field and causing the listener to leap up in horror to yank the needle off the offending groove. Country fiddlin' still awaits its rightful documentation -- and fans are advised to keep listening to their old Gid Tanner 78's until then.

(Reviewer: Buck Duane)

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH FOLKSONG

SONGS AGAINST THE BOMB (Topic 12001)
EWAN MacCOLL, PEGGY SEEGER: NEW BRITON
GAZETTE (Folkways 8732)

Anti-Bomb rallies, rewritten American banjo tunes, Labor Party Leftism, skiffle, English music hall sentimentality, unionism, radio and TV pop music, topical disasters, atomic age cynicism, minor key Scottish melodies, Bluegrass banjo, penetrating poetic insight, and blatant propaganda -- the bewildering array of influences and components that compromise British topical song adds up to a formless,

up-and-down, in-and-out panorama that at times borders on hysteria. Demonstrating this evolving music is the horrendous Topic issue and the brilliant Folkways NEW BRITON GAZETTE. On the latter, MacColl and Miss Seeger, singing and playing their own compositions, bolster their reputation as two of the most important musicians on the Anglo-American folk scene. They present a variety of songs to delight the ear and stimulate the imagination. MacColl's compositions have a hearty working-class virility about them that is exceptionally winning, and he sings with conviction and understanding. SHIFT BOYS SHIFT, BALLAD OF SPRINGHILL, and LIFEBOAT MONA could well become classics of labor and topical song in our time. I could not, however, fathom the motives behind MacColl's Jesus song -- wherein Jesus comes off as a sort of Semitic Joe Hill, a "working man" born "in the slums of Bethlehem" who becomes a "roving" sort of chap who tells the Galilee workers "If you will only organize..." and whose "dream at last is coming true..." Unionism? At best, it seems a shoddy attempt to attach the concomitant emotions of Christianity to unionism -- which certainly doesn't need such a crutch. But the rest of the album is a triumph -- newborn and vigorous folksong.

Witness Peggy's CROOKED CROSS, an angry outcry against neo-Nazism; COME FILL YOUR GLASSES, a jolly, warm, and singable Holiday round-the-fireside song (and my favorite on the album); and COME, ME LITTLE SON, a lullaby sung to a child whose daddy works away from home on the highway. This last may seem maudlin to some, but Peggy's beautiful singing and playing rescue it to my satisfaction. There is even a song in the "pop" vein -- Peggy's SPACE GIRL SONG, sung into an echo chamber and revealing a well-worked-out pop-singing style on Peggy's part.

Peggy, ripening as a singer at 24, no longer has the fresh, vocal bloom of her youth. Her maturity and, perhaps, her intensive concert work, have brought a crisp edge to her voice -- a more professional and less immediately appealing sound. But this doesn't detract from her brilliance as probably the most inventive and consummate young musician to emerge from the "folk boom." But it remains that her forte (and MacColl's, too) is intimacy. This, I think, is the reason they are so unsuccessful on the Topic issue -- leading a Soho hootenanny audience in peace songs. When Peggy cuts loose to sing above the audience, her small voice becomes an unpleasant squawk. Peggy and Ewan and their assistants, Fred and Betty Dallas, just don't have the inspirational magnetism of a Pete Seeger -- a prerequisite for leading "cause" songs successfully. The flip (flop) side of the

Topic disc contains an odd assortment -- the London Youth Choir, some shaky soprano soloists, clumsy and harmonically weird British style "Scruggs" banjo, and some highly boring anti-bomb songs. This is a well-intended effort, but it is so bizarre and sloppy that it's not worth your time and money.

BARRY HANSEN WRITES

Editors' Note: Staffer Barry Hansen is program director of Reed College Radio Station KRRC, Portland, Oregon. He runs a melange of folk and blues radio programs and will continue to write for LSR. If you're in that area and have an FM set, tune him in.

Dear Paul and Jon,

"..I can't wait to start my radio show. I can't escape the feeling that folk music, in all grades of authenticity, has moved into the position of favor among college kids that was once held by jazz. We are having trouble finding people to play jazz records on our station. I don't know of any jazz musicians in the student body, but 5-string banjos are everywhere. Some of them know only K-Trio and Weavers stuff, to be sure, but a freshman next door to me has been learning from Tom Paley records."

Barry Hansen

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER

Bob DeCormier and Chorus: SONGS AND LEGENDS OF AMERICAN RIVERS (20th-Century Fox 3035)

Theodore Bikel: SONGS OF RUSSIA, OLD AND NEW (on Elektra)

Lonnie Donegan: SKIFFLE FOLK MUSIC (on Atlantic)

Norman Luboff Choir: SONGS OF THE COWBOY (on Columbia)

The Limelitters have signed with RCA-Victor and will be given the big push.

Ron and Jane Satlof: FOLKSONGS FOR A COFFEE HOUSE (Bobtone 2060)

BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON, Vol. 2 (on Riverside)

Art and Paul: SONGS OF EARTH AND SKY (on Columbia)

Nothing new on Vanguard or Tradition.

Folkways (God bless 'em) have a new Pete Seeger: PETE SEEGER AT THE VILLAGE GATE (2450) which will be reviewed in LSR #8. See our ad on page 16-17.

Alan Schackner: ANYONE CAN PLAY THE HARMONICA (Epic 3730) Reviewed in LSR #8.

ENGLISH RECORDS

JOE GORDON FOLK FOUR (HMV 1379)

A. L. LLOYD: A SELECTION FROM THE PENGUIN BOOK OF ENGLISH FOLKSONGS (Collector 5001)

BOB ROBERTS (Collector JEB 6)

Guy Carawan: SONGS OF THE SOUTH (Collector JEA 4)

ATTENTION: RECORD COLLECTORS

LSR readers who wish to help Louis Deneumoustier and Joe Nicholas compile their catalog of Country, Western, and Folk LP's can do so by doing the following: List your folk LP's with artist(s), album title, song titles (and artists of each one in cases of separate artists), and record number and size (10 or 12"). Send to Louis at Box 169, Cheswold, Delaware, by January 15, 1961. The catalog will contain over 1000 discs, and will be a must for every serious record collector. Reserve a copy now, for printing is limited. Cost will be a dollar to \$2.50, depending on response -- the more the cheaper. We're waiting for ours already.

WEDGELY TODD NEWS

Wedgely Todd spent a weekend in NYC during mid-September, but couldn't find any bookings on short notice. Todd reports hearing a few good pickers around the Square, but didn't dare play himself -- for fear of being mobbed by over-enthusiastic banjo fanatics. Wedgely said he went to the Folklore Center to greet Izzy Young -- but couldn't catch the elusive proprietor in. See ad page 18.

(continued from page 2)

Izzy and Loretta Young; Rolf and Gus Cahn; Furry and John L. Lewis; Oscar and Neville Brand; Mike and Wedgely Todd; Robert Pete and Esther Williams; Malvina and Quentin Reynolds; Harry, Jeanie, and Mae West; Brownie and Fibber McGhee; Jack and T. S. Eliot(t); Salli and Sonny Terri; Jack L. and Frank Warner; Myron, John, and Mickey Cohen; A. B., Tyrone, and Woody Guthrie; Henry and Mickey Miller; Chico and Frank Hamilton; Howlin' and Thomas Wolf(e); Joseph and Elizabeth Cotten; and Cowboy Howard Vokes.

As long as we're at it, we'll steal a march from Jac Holzman and propose LSR's IN and OUT:

Johnny Cash is IN on Sun records, but out on Columbia.

Lonnie Donegan is IN.

Manny Solomon is so far OUT that he's IN, Elektra's song texts are OUT, but Folkways' are IN.

Odetta is OUT; Derroll Adams is IN.

Coffee houses and after-the-concert folk parties are definitely OUT.

Hogman Maxey is IN.

Melvin McCosh is IN from noon to six every day.

Gene Bluestein is IN.

Cowboy Howard Vokes, Hally Wood, Harvey Fink, and Sid Harkreader are all IN.

Sacco is IN; Vanzetti is OUT.

Arch-top banjos are OUT, but flat-top banjos are IN.

Gid Tanner with Faith Norris is IN, but

with Riley Puckett he's OUT.

Jay Smith is IN.

Barry Vogel is OUT.

The photograph of Lomax in ROGUE is OUT.

RCA-Victor re-issuing Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers as "Guy Willis and His Oklahoma Wranglers" is way, way OUT.

Billy Faier's LUTE SONG FOR BANJO is OUT, but CARAVAN is IN.

Jac Holzman is IN, but Elektra's latest releases are OUT.

The Sloop John B, Lonesome Traveller, The Riddle Song, Wanderin', Cindy, Sinner Man, One Meat Ball, There's a Hole in the Bucket, Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye, Santy Anno, Frozen Logger, Shenendoah, Scarlet Ribbons, and Kisses Sweeter Than Wine are all OUT, OUT, OUT. (Sounds like some new group's debut LP).

Hootin' Blues #2, Dreadful Memories, Come See, Dixie Bee Line, John the Revelator, Train on the Island, Give That N----r Ham, Ranger's Command, Shady Grove, Ella Speed, The Death of Blind Boy Fuller, The Cruel Mother, S-A-V-E-D, and Bonnie George Campbell are all IN, IN, IN.

Martin Dreadnoughts are OUT, but Gretsch Rangers are IN.

Subscribing to LSR is definitely IN, and nobody wants to be left OUT. Don't miss any of our "rapier-like thrusts," listings, letters, and jolly good fun. Another whopping issue next month.

CURRENT AND CHOICE

BILL McADOO: BILL McADOO SINGS
(Folkways 2448)

A young man with a cause --
and the most important young Negro
folksinger in years.

WOODY GUTHRIE: BALLADS OF SACCO
AND VANZETTI (Folkways 5485)

One of the true giants of folk
music singing his own songs.

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: Vol. II.
(Folkways 2397)

Seeger, Cohen, and Paley shuck up
some fine corn.

BEEN HERE AND GONE. Volume 10, Music
of the South. Coll. by F. Ramsey.
(Folkways 2659)

Excellent documentary in the Folk-
ways tradition.

LEADBELLY: NEGRO FOLK SONGS FOR
YOUNG PEOPLE (Folkways 7533)

Leadbelly's only concert record-
ings -- old and "new" songs.

JEAN THOMAS, THE TRAIPSIN' WOMAN:
AMERICAN FOLK SONG FESTIVAL
(Folkways 2358)

Authentic Southern Mt. folksong.

**'THE ONLY MONTHLY IN THE
FOLK MUSIC FIELD'**



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LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

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**THE LITTLE SANDY
REVIEW**

~~POETRY ROOM~~

Barbara Rauhala's fine drawing of Ewan MacColl graces this month's cover of LSR. MacColl, the Scottish-born poet, playwright, actor, folk-singer, and folksong writer, has recorded extensively for Riverside, Tradition, Folkways, Stinson, Topic, Wattle, and Columbia.

EDITOR'S COLUMN

EDITOR'S COLUMN

By Paul Nelson & Jon Pankake

We are pleased to announce that the LSR-produced (Dave Glover did the work) *LITTLE BLACK SONGBOOK* by Ron McElderry is now available. It contains 16 fine songs by one of America's finest young songwriters, and can be obtained by sending just 50 cents to LSR, Attention: Charlie Coda, 3220 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis 7, Minnesota. Get yours today ... LSR #10 (which will be out real quick) will be devoted entirely to the review of Alan Lomax's great 7-volume set on Atlantic (the most important set of LP's since the Folkways Anthology) plus a review of Lomax's new book, *THE FOLK SONGS OF NORTH AMERICA*, published by Doubleday.

(continued on page 44)

RECORD REVIEWS

THE UNFORTUNATE RAKE (Folkways 3805) A Study in the Evolution of a Ballad.

"It is obvious from the great wealth of material available that an extended monograph on this ballad cycle is long overdue," states editor Ken Goldstein in his notes to this LP. I can only humbly second this, and add that this is the finest documentary to come from Folkways since John Cohen's Kentucky disc. The 19 versions of THE UNFORTUNATE RAKE heard in this study, each a step in the fascinating folk process, comprise a magnificent and dizzying puzzle -- with no beginning or end. For a rare 55-odd minutes, the oral folk song tradition comes alive, compressed and accelerated like a well-edited newsreel of 300 years of history, revealed to the ear and mind in all its mystery. The dying young man who infallibly requests a processional funeral, with its ritualistic and mystic overtones, is traced from British broadside balladry to the sea; from Scotland to the West Indies; pulls an amazing sex switch and becomes the "Bad Girl;" weaves from the streets of Laredo to the Negro honky-tonks; and ends, rather ignominiously, as a UCLA professor.

Much of the brilliance of the study is due, of course, to the gallery of singers assembled to spin the Rake yarn as it should be spun -- the prospect of hearing such singers as A. L. Lloyd, Ewan MacColl, Hally Wood, Harry Jackson, Alan Lomax, John Green-

way, and Pete Seeger on one record should whet the appetite of the most jaded folk fan. And just to mention a few of the more outstanding examples: Mr. Lloyd's hypnotically beautiful rendition of the earliest-known Broadside version -- a performance so rank with atmosphere that it fairly threatens to envelop one in the fog of an 18th century London quay; Hally Wood's excellent recreation of Mrs. Texas Gladden's ONE MORNING IN MAY (and a prime example of what can be done with Library of Congress source materials); an astonishing field recording of a Virgin Islands singer, Mrs. Viola Penn, whose quaint pronunciation and guitar accompaniment create a wonderful mood; and Alan Lomax's tough, blunt ST. JAMES HOSPITAL.

Natural grippers and fault-finders will raise at least two objections to this record -- so let me list (and refute) the possibilities right here and now.

1. The disc is designed as a "demonstration tool for classroom work" -- not as a standard "entertaining" LP.

2. Ten of the 19 cuts have been lifted from various Riverside, Elektra, Tradition, and Folkways LP's.

Firstly, most intelligent people consider enjoyment and edification to be two sides of the same coin. If anyone more than passingly interested in folksong doesn't find study of this spectrum of ballads an exciting and rewarding experience -- well, brother, it's easy

enough to create a fool's paradise for yourself by putting on a Limeliter's album. Ken Goldstein's concise and penetrating notes surpass even his high standards -- and I found his discussion of mutational changes and parodies most thought-provoking. Also, those who are prejudiced against folk-scholars as tweedy, stodgy, and stultifying old fogeys should listen carefully to the singing of D. K. Wilgus, Ken Goldstein, John Greenway, and Alan Lomax (all heard on this disc) -- and discover what benefits an understanding of the historical and emotional perspective of folk material can bring to an untrained singer's performing.

It is highly unlikely that the average record collector will have all the albums borrowed from. Even so, the collection of variants on one record, with each one heard while its predecessor is fresh in the mind, affords a building of excitement and a montage effect that listening to the variants on separate records would not allow. In addition to this, I consider the unpublished material contained on the album well worth the purchase price alone.

Obviously, THE UNFORTUNATE RAKE will be a basic part of any serious folk music collector's library -- but it will likewise serve, to the listener just becoming seriously interested in the esthetic dimensions of folksong, as a perfect introduction to an unlimited and highly gratifying field of study.

BROWNIE McGHEE: TRADITIONAL BLUES, Volume Two (Folkways 2422)

This album is one of the most effective presentations of the blues for an intellectual audience ever made. This is not to say that these performances are in any way slick or artificial, as is the case with most blues made for a white "intellectual" audience. Here is topnotch blues, recorded in magnificent hi-fi, and beautifully processed with excellent notes by Charles Edward Smith.

Brownie's material in this album is drawn from a source (the mainly city-bred jazz blues of Bessie Smith and Ma Rainey) not within his original idiom. The words of these songs (and, to a certain extent, the tunes) would sound ridiculous sung by a Blind Lemon, or by Brownie himself twenty years ago. But Brownie has changed his style, not drastically, but just enough so that he can intelligently convey the message of the rather sophisticated lyrics and blend them perfectly into his style, which is still basically that of the country blues. (Josh White and the aging Big Bill Broonzy tried the same thing, with great acclaim but little musical success). Brownie is probably the first singer ever to do this right. Brownie has put a lot of thought into these performances, and it

has been directed toward two ends: to make the blues as honest and solidly traditional as possible, and, at the same time, to perfect them to the best of his ability. (Not a bad creed for any folksinger). His singing is smoother than it used to be, but has lost very little of its message. Brownie's work is that of a superbly skilled craftsman, but he never shows off his skill for its own sake. Brownie on this album is to Blind Lemon roughly as Pete Seeger is to Doc Boggs; those who are inspired the most by raw, primitive blues like Lemon's won't be quite as inspired by this disc, but most folk and jazz collectors will find this a real treasure. With Brownie's TRADITIONAL BLUES, Volume One, this album makes an ideal introduction for anybody new to the blues. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

THE CARTER FAMILY: MOUNTAIN MUSIC, Volume Two (Brunswick oe 9168) An English EP.

Lest anyone race out and send a fast money order off to England expecting four songs on the order of the Carter's Folkways Anthology work, let me warn you that what you will get will not be anything at all like SINGLE GIRL or LITTLE MOSES. What you will get is four sides culled from America's Decca label and recorded quite a while after the material that the Anthology songs were dubbed from. The songs are mostly commercial mountain music (but NOT the kind that the New Lost City Ramblers have revived) of the strict

non-folk variety: nice enough to listen to, but of minor interest to the folk fan. There is, however, one winner -- a song named DIXIE DARLING, intoned in a fine mountain manner by A. P. Carter himself, whose fine, fragile, airy voice sings of the whirling belles and the magnolia trees to the resounding thump of Maybelle Carter's fine folk guitar. The other three songs (YOU ARE MY FLOWER, COAL MINER'S BLUES, YOU DENIED YOUR LOVE) can best be summed up by comparing them to the Carter's worst work on Acme. They do not have much interest for anybody save the dyed-in-wool commercial country record fan of that day and age.

It was a real pity to read a week or so ago of A. P. Carter's death. Much of his folk work will live forever, and, needless to say, much more of it needs to be documented. Perhaps RCA-Victor will now release some Carter Family sides on its Camden label as a Memorial Album. No one deserves it more than A. P. Carter. (Reviewer: Ashley Scooter)

Once and For All Dept. -- MIKE RUSSO
IS NOT FROM SEATTLE. HE IS FROM
PORTLAND, HE IS FROM PORTLAND, HE IS
FROM PORTLAND!

A Minneapolis folk-wag recently suggested this as our credo: WE HAVEN'T HEARD IT YET, FOLKS, BUT WHEN WE DO, WE'LL PROBABLY PUKE! Are we really that tough?

ODETTA AT CARNEGIE HALL (Vanguard 9076)

In all fairness to Odetta and to Manny Solomon (both probably very nice people), let me say that I tried; I really tried, to like this album. After reading the liner notes where S. W. Bennett told me carefully and copiously what wonderful musical subtleties were going on between Odetta, her guitar, her clapping, and Bill Lee's bass; and, after the playing of the album itself, I must sadly report that, for me anyway, Odetta doesn't have a thing.

Perhaps I'm just a musical clod, but I can't help thinking that Leadbelly would have laughed out loud if he could have heard Odetta's ridiculously pretentious versions of GALLOWS POLE and MEETING AT THE BUILDING, complete with Johnnie Ray sobs and whines, John Jacob Niles phrasing, and weak Actor's Studio tricks. And the great JOHN HENRY would have hidden his face in shame if he would have had to listen to Odetta sing his song, so incredibly false and off-the-mark does it ring. One gets the feeling of an enormous dishonesty in all that this woman sings (although, I, for one, don't think she knows any better) -- the "prison songs" contain neither anguish nor nobility, only phony theatricality; the ballads neither beauty nor folk feeling, only a trained voice taking the easy way; the shouting numbers neither excitement nor spirit, only

someone yelling as loud as they can in time with an ump-chuck-ah-boom guitar. Odetta seems to attack almost everything in the manner of a battleship about to do battle with a kid's toy boat -- by the time she's done, you know there won't be much left. She doesn't really sing a song; she beats it to death with a club. Her nuances and vocal techniques are not at all folk (contrary to what TIME says), and if any trace of real folk music does manage to sneak in, it quickly gets all mixed up and out of control with everything else in her vocal repertoire and comes out at some ridiculous moment. This woman has an awful lot to learn about folksinging before she can even begin to live up to her unfounded reputation.

I'm afraid I would pretty much have to agree with the AYH manual on HOW TO RUN A FOLKSONG CONCERT about Odetta: "In my opinion a downright poor musician who really belts them out ... would probably draw well if you don't mind abetting musical atrocities." As evidence, I would invite anyone to put their needle down on AIN'T NO GRAVE CAN HOLD MY BODY DOWN on this album.

One more thing: the title of this LP is ODETTA AT CARNEGIE HALL but the notes tell us that "several of the songs were later redone (for technical reasons) ...

but remain the songs and interpretations heard at the concert." Which makes about as much sense as replaying a baseball game alone in your closet, but acting out each play just as it happened on the ball field.

Odetta also has a Christmas album available: ODETTA SINGS CHRISTMAS SPIRITUALS (Vanguard 9079).

BELAFONTE RETURNS TO CARNEGIE HALL (RCA-Victor 6007) With Odetta, Mariam Makeba, The Chad Mitchell Trio, The Belafonte Folksingers, and A Cast of Thousands.

It seems that Carnegie Hall was full of rummies this year. First, we had Odetta, and now Harry Belafonte and Odetta again, complete with the largest vocal menagerie of "folksingers" ever assembled on one stage -- enough people to sink a fleet of battleships, but not quite enough to manage to sing even one honest folksong.

"Belafonte," the notes scream in the true soft-sell Vanguard-Victor prestige tradition of salesmanship, "was faced with the sharp challenge of living up to a legend!" Wow! In case any of you are wondering what that legend was, I'll tell you. It was Belafonte in his first Carnegie Hall concert, which according to Bob Bollard's plushy liner notes, was "so electric it opened new vistas," etc. Any of you who have heard the records of Belafonte's first concert may legitimately wonder just what all the fuss was about. If any legend was born, it

was one to try to live down, and not to try to live up to.

Nonetheless, here is the second Carnegie Hall concert -- all decked out in a 2-LP set with Belafonte himself smiling benevolently down on us from the cover. I think it is safe to say that no legends will be created from this set of records.

There is just one word for almost all the performers and performances in this album -- and that word is AWFUL. The Chad Mitchell bunch represents that familiar archetype of three crewcut college boys full to the brim with commercially canned enthusiasm and modern hip humor (?), contributing such gems to the folk process as "there's gold in them there hills" to songs like DOCTOR FREUD. And, yes, they sing it complete with the "cha cha cha" bit. I suppose one could say that the Belafonte Folksingers (and I use the word loosely) were the first group to bring barbershop singing to folk music. Somehow, it doesn't seem to work in THE OX DRIVER'S SONG or, for that matter, in any of their numbers. The liner notes claim that "there is no other group of this nature in existence today." For which we are grateful. Mariam Makeba, suffice it to say here, seems to be the victim of some kind of a trap. She doesn't belong in a folk concert. Her appeal is strictly aimed at the jazz buffs. Even so, she seems to do as well as anyone.

That brings us down to the giants of the folk world -- "The First Lady of Folksong" and "The Living Legend." The Living Legend seems to fancy himself as quite a humorist now, and most of his numbers are intended to be funny. They are not, however, largely because Mr. Belafonte does not have any sense of comic timing -- he'll wait forever for his laugh, and, as a result, we are forced to sit through a woefully weak rendition of CHICKENS that seems to last a good 10 minutes because Mr. Belafonte believes he is being hilarious.

In this same vein, we are "treated" to what are undoubtedly Belafonte's two dullest numbers -- A LITTLE LYRIC OF GREAT IMPORTANCE (how many times have I heard that?) and THERE'S A HOLE IN THE BUCKET, with Odetta. The first number only Mr. Belafonte seems to see any humor in, and the seemingly endless BUCKET song never fails to remind me of just how long and how bad the movie BEN-HUR was. Somehow, the two seem to go together. Whoever told Belafonte and Odetta they were funny, I'm sure didn't mean it in a complimentary way. The First Lady of Folksong also does BALD MOUNTAIN and WATER BOY for the umpteenth time on record, and I fail to see any distinction that this version might have that the others did not.

There are a few more songs, but you've heard most of them before anyway. After all, how many times must one buy JUMP DOWN SPIN

AROUND and SUZANNE by Belafonte before he'll stop recording it. To cap it all off, there is "an 8-minute life and blood recreation of a Mexican fiesta" which doesn't sound like it even managed to get Belafonte excited. But, then, I guess you can get away with murder when you're a "Living Legend." After all, Mr. Belafonte is an ARTIST! Just ask him. (Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

HARRY AND JEANIE WEST: SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN FOLKSONGS (Melodisc EPM 7-111) An English EP.

The sole reason for reviewing this fine little English EP of previously unavailable Stinson material is to dissuade anyone from buying it in this form and to announce that Stinson has recently re-released the entire source LP -- 14 songs in all -- in this country for only \$3.98. For once, we will not have to send to England for our old country records! Aficionados (and we are among them) of the Wests will tell you that their Stinson work is their very finest, the songs are superb, the recording is good, etc. -- so what are we waiting for! Perhaps if we all buy this set, we can persuade Stinson to re-release their other Harry and Jeanie LP also (which contains that dandy of

dandies, KATY DEAR). Englishmen need not feel bad. I'm sure that Melodisc will withdraw this excellent EP and put out the whole album shortly. For other Stinson re-releases (or should we say new old Stinsons?), see elsewhere in this issue.

GUY CARAWAN: SONGS FROM THE SOUTH (Collector jea 4) An English EP.
GUY CARAWAN: MICHAEL, ROW THE BOAT ASHORE and OLD MAN ATOM (Nixa 45rpm 7N.15132) An English 45.

It would be hardly fair to criticize these records at any length for they represent the first recorded work (1957) of a young American folksinger who has since matured a great deal. On the EP (just re-released this year), Guy sings two songs new to his American audiences -- although neither one is very well done -- SOUTH COAST, the Kingston Trio tune, and DINK'S SONG, which is crooned in such a way as to suggest that at this time Guy was still treading lightly over the tops of folksongs, without much awareness as to what they were made of. The other two songs in the Collector set are NO MORE CANE ON THE BRAZOS and BOLL WEEVIL, both better done later on Folkways. The little Nixa 45rpm features Guy and "the Dave Lee Singers and Players" (better known to LSR readers as Dave Lee and the Bandits) on MICHAEL, ROW THE BOAT (done with lots of lung power and hash-house skiffle accompaniment) and Guy alone (all echoed-up)

on OLD MAN ATOM, which he has done much better since. Although both records are, by and large, unsatisfying, Guy's fans in this country may obtain them at meager cost from Agate and Ken Lindsay, and keep their Carawan collection complete.

SHIRLEY COLLINS: ENGLISH SONGS
(Collector jeb 5) An English EP.

There is a small but perceptive segment of the American folk music market that regards the recordings of Shirley Elizabeth Collins as British exports quite as important as Scotch tweed and good Irish whiskey. These wise fans will not mind that two of the four love ballads on this EP are already in their collections (THE UNQUIET GRAVE and I DREW MY SHIP appear on Miss Collins' Folkways LP). They will gladly, even eagerly, buy the disc in order to hear their favorite sing THE IRISH GIRL (the ancestor of our LOVIN' HANNAH) and NEWCASTLE (a demonstration of singing style so beautiful as to be rare even in Miss Collins' work). This highly gratified circle of listeners is most willing to accept new members -- especially folk song lovers who are genuinely sick of the Bermuda-clad beatniks and coffee house queens that pass for female-type folksingers in this country; and who want to hear a lovely singer who has taken the time

and trouble to learn folk singing style. This record would be a good introduction. It, like the singing of Miss Collins, is a breath of fresh Sussex breeze.

ANYONE CAN PLAY THE HARMONICA (Epic 5 LN 3730) Lessons by Alan Schackner.

Although this record is not at all aimed at the folk public, LSR lists it here because it is the only available instruction record that we know of for an instrument many folk song fans want to learn to play. An instruction book and a Hohner Marine Band harmonica (single-reed, the best type for folk music, and in the handy key of C) are included. The lessons were prepared by Alan Schackner, whose chief claim to fame seems to be that he has taught Arthur Godfrey, Bill Stern, Joseph Cotten, and Milton Berle to play. If he could teach that crew, he ought to be able to teach anybody. Although the lessons, dictated by an oily-voiced radio announcer, may make you laugh yourself silly the first time through, just swallow your distaste for TO A WILD ROSE and IN THE EVENING BY THE MOONLIGHT and do what you're told. You will have the basics in hand and should be able to go on to develop a folk style on your own. One thing: in the lesson on tonal color, Schackner will illustrate not only the "correct" tonal color, but the INCORRECT

as well. THIS is the one to use -- unless, of course, you want to sound like Leo Diamond.

AMERICAN HISTORY IN BALLAD AND SONG, Volume One -- Junior High School Social Studies (Folkways 5801) With Pete Seeger, Peggy Seeger, Woody Guthrie, Ed McCurdy, Hermes Nye, Logan English, Wallace House, Jerry Silverman, Elizabeth Knight, and others. A 3-LP set.

When I was a kid in junior high, my social studies class consisted of having each kid orate on a current event or news item that had happened to catch his youthful fancy during the week. At the conclusion of the last blushing, mumbled speech, the entire class was tested by a monitor to discover the degree of assimilation (if any) of the world's doings -- while the teacher slipped down to the boiler room for a smoke. These were some of the more dismal hours in my generally happy youth. Therefore, I absolutely turn green with envy of today's enlightened junior high social classes when I find that they can study the problems of the American farmer by listening to Woody Guthrie sing DUST STORM DISASTER; learn about Colonial hardship by hearing Peggy Seeger's WHEN I WAS SINGLE; study the causes of

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industrial fair play legislation by hearing Pete Seeger sing THE BLIND FIDDLER; and so on. Ah, progress! This stride forward in educational technique is due, of course, to Mr. Asch -- who has, with Albert Barouh and Theodore Cron, produced a brilliant audio aid to the social study of American history, garnering its material from the backlog of the rich Folkways library. Organized under nine heads (Colonial America, Development of Democracy, The Industrial Era, The World of Man, etc.), each of the 57 songs is a lesson in itself -- complete with accompanying vocabulary list, discussion questions, and creative homework assignments. I can only say that it is high time something like this has become available -- thank you, Mr. Asch. The set should gain great favor among teachers, but my natural cynicism toward kids brings to my mind's eye a vision of a seventh-grader scanning the lesson schedule and bawling, "Where's Marty Robbins?"

(Reviewer: Edmund Gilbertson)

Editors' Note: Serious collectors may wish to note that the above 3-LP set does contain some new material previously unissued by Folkways, although, by and large, most of the songs have been taken from available LP's.

PRESTIGE 1015 -- BLIND REV. GARY DAVIS!!!

ALAN MILLS: CANADA'S STORY IN SONG (Folkways 3000) A 2-LP set with notes by Edith Fowke.

CANADA'S STORY IN SONG, by Edith Fowke and Alan Mills; piano accompaniments by Helmut Blume; W. J. Gage Ltd., Toronto, 230 pages, \$5.00.

Here is the ideal Christmas gift for both the dyed-in-wool Canadian folksong fan and the American folk enthusiast just getting interested in Canadian music. For this handsome record-book set (and that is the way it should be bought) contains an interesting and thorough history of Canada told through its folk songs. The book contains words and music to 72 songs, plus copious illustrations and intelligent text; while the record has co-author Mills singing 44 of these songs to the accompaniment of guitarist Gilbert Lacombe and accordianist Gordon Fleming. Mr. Mills, Canada's leading folksinger, is, needless to say, ideally suited for this material, and his singing can best be compared to that of the early Burl Ives (and I do not mean this as being derogatory). His singing (while not really in the folk style) contains much charm and wit, and he is a thoroughly likeable, if somewhat superficial, performer.

The book's 72 songs are divided into 14 logical progressions -- each thoroughly documented both musically and historically:

Before the White Man, Discovery of Canada, Voyageurs & Missionaries, Coming of the English, Wars Against the U.S., Rebellion of 1837-38, Country Grows, Toward Confederation, Opening of the West, Cowboys & Homesteaders, Sailors & Fishermen, Lumberjacks, Miners & Prospectors, and Modern Times. The record uses only four such division markers: Early Years, British Take Over, Toward Confederation, and The Country Grows, although it contains songs from each of the book's sections.

There is one rather gaping omission from the book, however, and that is that there are no guitar chords for the songs, only piano accompaniments. This error should have been rectified before the book was published, but, otherwise, CANADA'S STORY IN SONG (both the record and the book) stands as a completely absorbing and enjoyable "informal social history of Canada."

GUY CARAWAN: THE NASHVILLE SIT-IN STORY (Folkways 5590)

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place into meaningful and coherent sociological and emotional form all the kaleidoscopic happenings of the current problems down South. To say that the record moves one deeply is indeed the understatement of the year: for who can say that WE SHALL OVERCOME, when taken in the light of the events that happen almost daily in Nashville and, more recently, in New Orleans, is not the most passionate and rightful folksong now being sung. Here is protest song that should have real meaning for everyone living in the United States, or, for that matter, the world. There are mean things happening in this world.

The album itself contains snatches of songs (sung by Carawan and others) being used in the sit-in movement: everything from re-worded Negro spirituals to hill-billy tunes to modern gospel quartet and R & B songs a la the Vee Jay 45rpm releases. Interspersed with the songs are comments by various people involved in the sit-in scenes in cafes, court rooms, and prisons -- enacted, in part, by Negro students who actually lived them.

"I decided to try and record some of the spirited singing and new songs that had grown up around the movement," says Guy in his notes. "Then the idea hit me that the songs would mean more to people if they were put in the contexts from which they came.

The scenes that were re-enacted were done so semi-spontaneously by the students." Being young, their enthusiasm born of their heady initial victory, they project a joyous image unto so grim a subject -- they have good fun reliving their jail experiences, poking fun at illiterate judges and stodgy NAACP conservatives, and singing their own protest songs, which are as fresh as newsprint and as valid a part of the folk process as their ancestors, the street Broad sides of old England and colonial America.

Listen especially to Candy Anderson's fine THEY GO WILD OVER ME for a summation of the satiric song thrusts being used in Nashville and elsewhere in the South. Also included are YOUR DOG LOVES MY DOG and YOU BETTER LEAVE SEGREGATION ALONE in the humorous vein, and WE SHALL NOT BE MOVED and WE SHALL OVERCOME (which opens and closes the album) in a more serious form of protest. There is no fanaticism or mob riot in the album -- only the story of Americans seeking moral justice in a democracy somehow gone awry.

Guy Carawan has said elsewhere: "I've become consumed by the drama that is going on here as I've become more personally acquainted with many of its characters. When it happens to friends (and to yourself) -- I mean the ugliness, the fears, the show of personal courage and love in the face of physical dangers,

economic reprisals, hatred of hoodlums, mobs -- you can't be around things like that for long without being completely consumed by them. There are times when I get so completely satiated with it all that I just have to get away from it or push it out of my mind ... Not that I don't see the negative angles and impulses along with the good -- but it's enough for me to see those occasional flights of nobility, courage, and love along with a steady day-to-day ability to live through all kinds of trials and still have the spark of humor and friendliness that make life worthwhile to keep me going and thinking that it's worth trying to lend my small bit to this struggle. My concert work will only seem significant to me to the extent that I can express some of these feelings I have and the realities of my own life. That seems to be a long time in coming but I feel it's starting now."

Which is as good a summary of this disc as one could wish for. Edited and collected by Guy Carawan, himself an integral part of the sit-in story, this LP will both inform and inspire those who hear it. Listen to their story -- and listen well.

CHILD BALLADS TRADITIONAL IN THE UNITED STATES (Library of Congress AAFS L 57, AAFS L 58) A 2-LP set.

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are available (read: when some private organization benevolently donates funds -- in this case, once again, the Carnegie Corporation), can produce folk LP's not likely to be matched by any commercial label. This enchanting set is hardly an exception. Enchanting, I say, because it is literally full of magic -- not only the magic of the cherry tree bowing down to Virgin Mary, or of the ship-sinking Mermaid, or the miraculous night ride of the "twelve months dead" lover; but the less tangible magic of the singers and their collective creativeness; the magic of the American folk process which performs such wonderful miracles as proposing Charles Stewart of the 1812 Lake Erie naval battles as the stalwart who attempts to bring the 16th Century Scottish sea marauder, Sir Andrew Barton, to justice; providing "Lloyd" Bateman with a Turkish lady named Susie Bates for his castle on the coast of Georgia; and transforming Sir Eglamore's battle with the dragon into Bangum's silly chase of the boar.

But the ballads would remain mere literary curiosities without the incredible performances of the singers -- and what a legendary array is presented here! Mrs. Texas Gladden (and who is to say that this woman is not the greatest American traditional singer ever to be recorded?); Aunt Molly Jackson, who Alan Lomax has

called the "most talented" individual he ever met; Mrs. Emma Dusenbury, peppy and doll-voiced; Jean Ritchie, already at 24 a past master of mountain singing; Warde Ford, who left his native Wisconsin to enrich California with his straightforward, tuneful singing and bagful of unique ballads; Pearl Jacobs Borusky, wan-voiced, youthful -- a lovely singer; and the best of all the treasures to be found in the set, Mrs. Crockett Ward's singing of EDWARD -- a perfect performance of as powerful a ballad and as beautiful a melody as I have heard in American tradition, and a performance I would place alongside Mrs. Gladden's HOUSE CARPENTER (AAFS L 1) and the Gant Family's WHEN FIRST TO THIS COUNTRY (unpublished Archive material) as the greatest recorded performances of folk music I have ever heard. To all this, add Bertrand Bronson's praiseworthy notes -- and this set easily adds up to the top record release of the year.

Upcoming in future LSR's will be reviews of other recent Library of Congress releases -- VERSIONS AND VARIANTS OF BARBARA ALLEN (AAFS L 54), FOLK MUSIC FROM WISCONSIN (AAFS L 55), and SONGS OF THE MICHIGAN LUMBERJACKS (AAFS L 56). 25c buys their complete catalog listings. Write: The Library of Congress, Music Division -- Recording Laboratory, Washington 25, D. C.

THREE BLUES QUICKIES

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS, BROWNIE MCGHEE, SONNY TERRY, AND BIG JOE WILLIAMS: DOWN SOUTH SUMMIT MEETING (World-Pacific 1296)

The title of this LP comes from a turn of events that found all four blues artists on the Coast last summer. They were brought together and recorded for the first time through the efforts of John Lomax, Jr. and Bess Lomax. The results (which add up to a major achievement in recorded blues) are an informal jam session sound with lots of "sounding and signifying" running back and forth between the four men: they take a general topic and work form and feeling into it; each adds a couple of verses and then passes it on to the next man, who keeps it going with his spontaneous additions. The rapport between the four men is nothing short of amazing; here indeed is the sound that comes when great men are working together. Hopkins contributes the album's best cut, HOW LONG HAVE IT BEEN SINCE YOU BEEN HOME, a fine example of his tremendous mood-creating ability. Brownie has rarely sounded better (most of his recent sophistication has been dropped here), and Sonny is his usual fine self, interspersing with a whoop here and there, while Big Joe Williams (not the Basie singer) drives the proceedings on with his big 9-string guitar. The chatter during songs is fascinating. On FIRST MEETING, a recreation of a letter Brownie wrote to

Lightnin' 18 years ago trying to get him to come to New York, Brownie sings, "I'm your friend, Mr. Hopkins, please, please, please, don't have no fear," and Lightnin' kind of chuckles and answers dryly, "I ain't got much." All in all, this album contains more rocking good-time blues than you can shake a stick at: the essence of a good "jooking" session has been completely perserved. (Reviewer: Dave Glover)

JOHN LEE HOOKER (SINGS THE BLUES): EVERY ONE A PEARL (King 727)

WARNING: this record is NOT for those who like an "easy listening folk blues" sound -- it's primitive, harsh, and sometimes savage. All the titles are re-masters of recordings that Hooker made for King in the mid-40's under the names of Texas Slim and John Lee Cooker. On all cuts, he accompanies himself with an electric guitar that throbs with intensity and fire. His foot stomps out the beat; he sings and moans in a voice full of power and emotion; and you're in the middle of the meanest of the low-down blues. Listen to WANDERING BLUES or MOANING BLUES and you'll see. Since the originals here were 78's, the fidelity is not too good, although King has sharpened it up a bit. In the process, they also dubbed in a drum backing behind DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME and LATE LAST NIGHT. Other than that slight bit of tampering, this album is the best representation of the early Hooker style in the days before he started to make R & B singles. Although his melodic

figures are rather limited, he has a highly complex rhythm working for him. The Library of Congress faction will be interested in DON'T GO BABY (which is similar to Vera Hall's ANOTHER MAN DONE GONE on AAFS L 4). Side 2 of this LP is an exact duplicate of the one that Hooker shared with Sticks McGhee on Audio-Lab 1520 -- not surprising since King owns both companies. One more thing: the cover says there are 16 songs (and there are), but only 12 of them are by Hooker. The other four are instrumentals by a city-bluesish combo led by an Earl Hooker. This is a pretty sneaky way to fill an album. Otherwise, this is a worthwhile LP -- unless you're afraid you might get burned. (Reviewer: Dave Glover)

BROWNIE MCGHEE AND SONNY TERRY: BLUES AND FOLK (Prestige Bluesville 1005)

I wish I didn't have to say this, but in all honesty, I can see absolutely no reason for the existence of this LP. It was recorded apparently with no thought or idea whatsoever behind it (at least no worthwhile thought): they've done the same songs many times before on record. And what's worse is that all the songs are sung in a "pop-blues" style (complete with forced and unnatural pronunciation) that is apparently designed to sell this record to the Kingston Trio buyer. Needless to say, this isn't going to work, and it's sad to see both

Brownie and Sonny (who sound like they learned from Josh White and Odetta here) get involved in such a bad album.
(Reviewer: Dave Glover)

BOOK REVIEW

THE FIVE-STRING BANJO: AMERICAN FOLK STYLES, by Peggy Seeger. 52 pages, 8½ x 11, \$1.95 (Hargail Press).

Commenting on Peggy's skill as a folk instrumentalist, Alan Lomax once wrote: "...there is no one I know..who can so quickly grasp the character of a folk tune and improvise an accompaniment for it." So when Peggy, our closest approximation to a Compleat City Folksinger, pours her knowledge of banjo lore into a manual; it is just cause for every picker to run (not walk) to his nearest music store and grab a copy. The first question that will be asked about the book is: "How does it stack up to Pete's?" Well, considering that Peggy's book contains detailed instructions for something over three dozen right-hand picking figures, seven tunings, four pages of chords and their relationships, and words and music to 23 songs, one familiar with Pete's book will immediately see that her approach is more ambitious and complex. From this viewpoint of a rank beginner, this very ambitiousness is the major

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They're all on HERITAGE 1003 -- 16 first-class blues performances, recorded and collected for HERITAGE by Chris Strachwitz and Bob Geddins. Price is only \$7.10 (postpaid) and the record is ONLY available from HERITAGE RECORDS, 36a Brook Green, London W.6., England. All issues are limited edition, so you are advised to be prompt. But, send no money with your order. You will be notified if yours is among the first 100.

#

Note: Orders are also being taken for HLP 1002, featuring New Orleans street singer SNOOKS EAGLIN (this is not the Folkways LP), which sold out in record time. A further pressing is planned in the near future.

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drawback of the work. A neophyte would have one heckuva time -- there are few diagrams and absolutely no tabulature at all. If you have never played before, I would certainly recommend Pete's more patient instructions (and his helpful recorded companion course) as a starting point. The basic value of Peggy's book is its documentation of the myriad of styles she has learned from others or worked out herself from her thorough knowledge of classical and folk music. For those of us who have worked our way, with love, sweat, and tears, through HOW TO PLAY THE FIVE-STRING BANJO, this new manual will be a welcome post-graduate course. In fact, just about any picker whose name isn't Darling or Sprung will be able to learn something of value from it -- so broad is its scope.

The book is nicely written in a neat, brisk, businesslike prose that stands in complete contrast to Pete's neighborly, anecdotal chatter. And therein lies the major difference in approach -- Pete's book is designed to foster an interest in the instrument, and to get people to play it; Peggy seems to be writing on the assumption that there exist serious folk musicians who want to learn a lot of the complexities of the instrument. The ultimate solution, of course, is for everyone to have BOTH inexpensive Seeger manuals in his instrument case.

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The following letter and article by John Greenway are self-explanatory. From his point-of-view, LSR's TRIBUTE TO WOODY GUTHRIE was an enormous error and may have done Woody some harm. We are grateful to Mr. Greenway for expressing this opinion, and wish to assure him (and anyone else) that no harm was intended. We would be grateful to hear from readers on this. We hope that Mr. Greenway's was not the universally accepted view about the Woody Tribute.

JOHN GREENWAY ON WOODY GUTHRIE

Gentlemen: I am grateful to you for your invitation to contribute to the second TRIBUTE TO WOODY GUTHRIE. I fear that I do not have the time ... You may, if you wish, extract whatever you like from my long section on Woody in my book, AMERICAN FOLKSONGS OF PROTEST, in which there are several statements of my very high regard for Woody. On second thought, I will dash off a few hundred words or so on Woody's ailment, if only to get this off my chest. I am continually annoyed these days by statements in print and out suggesting that Woody is improving. Indeed, in their letter printed in your REVIEW, issue No. 5, Bob & Sidsel Gleason say that "Woody is quite well." This sort of false optimism allows such things as the printing by Malvina

Reynolds (Editors' Note: We must take the blame here) of several of Woody's letters (again, I regret to say, in LSR) as if these were by the Woody we knew. Woody's condition is such, as you will see by the accompanying piece, that printing things written recently by him will only serve to make him look ridiculous. I hate for this to happen to the one genius of my wide acquaintance, and one of the sweetest persons who ever lived. I submit the accompanying piece to you since I think that you might venture it into print, to straighten out those who through ignorance or worse, are unwittingly hurting Woody's reputation. At any rate, you have my best wishes for your publication. I should like to know what your disposition of the piece will be. Sincerely yours,

JOHN GREENWAY

AN APPEAL TO THE FRIENDS OF WOODY GUTHRIE
by John Greenway

It might be a kindness to extract this page from issues that will reach Woody Guthrie or his children, but his friends should know something about the nature of the terrible disease that has stricken him. Dr. Edward I. Kessler, Physician in Charge of the New Jersey State Hospital, where Woody has been a patient since May,

1956, submitted to the first issue of THE WOODY GUTHRIE NEWSLETTER a statement confirming what many of us have known for years: that Woody is suffering from Huntington's Chorea. Dr. Kessler said, "This is an illness in which the patient has generalized tremors and shakes and the exact cause of this illness is unknown. There is one thing that we do know and that is that it is not caused by any infectious organism or agent." Although this is in the strictest sense true, the implication to the layman is misleading. Huntington's Chorea is a rigorously hereditary disease about which much is known as to its incidence (the reader may see the statistical inexorability of Huntington's Chorea in Ashley Montagu's HUMAN HEREDITY, New York, 1959) if not to its "cause," in Dr. Kessler's word -- by which I assume he means the precise mutagen which implanted it in the maternal side of Woody's family (Woody described the symptoms in his own mother on page 173 of his book, BOUND FOR GLORY). It is a very rare disease; in fact, many of the American cases can be traced to a single affected family which came to America from England 300 years ago. Its characteristics, though similar to the lesser St. Vitus' Dance, are unmistakable: the nervous system, including the brain, undergoes steady and irreversible deterioration; the victim shakes almost continuously until sleep takes him. The disease is incurable. In view of these facts, I appeal to those who are receiving letters from Woody not to

publish them; to do so would be to do an unforgivable disservice to the reputation of America's greatest folk composer.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER

Burl Ives: XMAS EVE WITH BURL IVES (Decca 8391) Vintage Ives.

Muddy Waters: MUDDY WATERS AT NEWPORT (Chess)

Ed McCurdy: HOMEWARD BOUND (Rodeo International 102) Canadian songs.

Willie Brady: IRISH SONGS OF FREEDOM (Avoca 123) We don't know either.

Gary Davis: THE HARLEM STREET SINGER (Prestige Bluesville 1015) One of the greatest albums of the year -- a must for everyone!

Ron & Nama: SING ALL NIGHT LONG (Columbia 1540) American songs.

The Tarriers: TELL THE WORLD ABOUT THIS (Atlantic 8042) Eric Weissberg is the current banjoist. Wedgely Todd next?

Shirley Abicair: WITH A DELICATE AIR (Columbia 1531) Love songs by an Australian lass.

The Easy Riders: REMEMBER THE ALAMO! (Kapp 3216) And forget this record.

Burl Ives: BURL IVES SINGS THE IRVING BERLIN SONGBOOK (United Artists 3117)

Oscar Brand: SONGS OF THE U.S. ARMY (Riverside 844)

Gerard Souzay: WORLD OF SONG (Capitol 7224) Classic type.

Stinson has re-released some more of

its excellent backlog of LP's. Now available are:

FOLKSAY, Volume III-IV (Stinson SLPX 9) Features Woody, Pete, Cisco, Leadbelly, etc.

FOLKSAY, Volume V-VI (Stinson SLPX 12) Features all of the above plus Hally Wood, Gary Davis, Frank Warner, others.

Harry & Jeanie West: SOUTHERN MOUNTAIN FOLKSONGS (Stinson SLP 36)

Leadbelly: PLAY-PARTY SONGS (Stinson SLPX 39)

Mechau Family: FOLKSONGS FOR YOUNG AND OLD (Stinson SLP 47)

Ellen Stekert: OZARK MOUNTAIN FOLKSONGS (Stinson SLP 49)

Robin Roberts: FOLK & TRADITIONAL LOVE SONGS (Stinson SLP 77)

A. L. Lloyd & Ewan MacColl: OFF TO SEA ONCE MORE (Stinson SLP 81)

Patrick Galvin: IRISH REBEL SONGS, Vol. I-III (Stinson SLP 83, 84, 85)

The SLP list price is \$3.98, while the SLPX's sell at \$4.98.

ENGLISH RECORDS

A TREASURY OF FIELD RECORDINGS (77-LA-12-2) The history of folk song in Texas, Negro & White, compiled by Mack McCormick. Features L. Hopkins, J. Lomax.

BLUES FELL THIS MORNING (Philips 7369) Anthology of American blues like our RBF's.

Ramblin' Jack Elliott: KID STUFF (Columbia SEG 8046) An EP.

SEAMUS ENNIS (Collector jef 6) An EP.

(continued from page 2)

Watch for it soon! ... Apparently LSR's erstwhile contribution to the dictionary, FOLKUM, has made the grade as a fully established word. This month it turned up in several reviews over in England and was also used in the big MADEMOISELLE folk article in this country ... Culled from Izzy Young via SING OUT! is the tremendous news that BOUND FOR GLORY, Woody Guthrie's book, will soon be available in paperback for just 95¢. Also from Izzy comes the word that Ralph Rinzler has recorded Clarence Ashley and that Folkways will issue the record soon ... The Folklore Center, by the way, has copies of Ron McElderry's LITTLE BLACK SONGBOOK ... The Padded Cell, Minneapolis 3.2 joint, has now undertaken a folk policy. First up were Art and Paul, two of the very worst of the new singers-en group, but coming later are some goodies -- Bonnie Dobson in late December, Ed McCurdy in January, and possibly Wedgely Todd, when he returns from the Coast. Paul Fink, the manager, would like to find out just what performers you would like to hear. Drop him a card and write The New Lost City Ramblers on it ... Blues fans had better count their pennies because the records are coming thick and fast. Prestige Bluesville has released a Rev.

Gary Davis LP that is an absolute must for everyone, and Chris Strachwitz has just issued his first release for the International Blues Club -- Arhoolie 1001, featuring Mance Lipscomb, Texas sharecropper and songster. Upcoming in future weeks on Prestige are albums by Roosevelt Sykes, Little Brother Montgomery, Sunnyland Slim, Lonnie Johnson, and Shaky Jake; while Arhoolie will feature Big Joe Williams, The Black Ace, Lil' Son Jackson, and many others. Chris has really got the International Blues Club going strong now, and those of you who haven't signed up yet had better do so immediately so as not to miss out on any of the fine albums being released. You get 3 LP's for \$12 (your choice of albums) plus bulletins, information on blues records on all labels, tips on where to get old blues 78's, etc. -- something that no true follower of the blues can afford to be without. Send \$12 to Chris today at P.O. Box 671, Los Gatos, California ... We were recently written up in the University of Minnesota's IVORY TOWER magazine and would like to pass on a couple of favorite passages to you here: "This feeling of irreverence seems to pervade every aspect of the magazine. Journalistically its (sic) a mess -- there is no overall design or layout, persons featured on the cover are seldom featured inside, articles and reviews promised for the next issue are again postponed and finally lost, fundamental grammatical mistakes pop up now and then ... but ...

all this adds to and makes up the personality of the magazine. It is as though the field of folk music is so big and exciting that there is no time for all of the world's details. The point is (all this) works." Also, the remark about "If you haven't ever read Woody, imagine a Southwestern Casey Stengel" ... Good place to buy folk records in the Twin Cities is Louise Music, 678 Grand, in St. Paul. Louise always features Stinson, Folkways, and other hard-to-find items ... DEEDS, NOT WORDS DEPT.: LSR readers can look forward to hearing Frank Hamilton on Audiophile Records soon. Audiophile is a Milwaukee-based record company which deals mostly in traditional jazz, but owner Ed Nunn commissioned LSR's editors to find him a folk album, and we did. Frank tells us he'll also do a Folkways album later in the year ... Wedgely Todd took off for Hollywood to do a movie about Mexican revolutionaries. He's supposed to record the title tune also. Todd left for movieland shortly after playing his way through Peggy Seeger's new banjo book, and commenting that, while an excellent book, it was much too simple for him. He mastered it all years ago ... Be sure to read Harry Oster's new catalog for Folk-Lyric Records. There should be one stuffed in each subscriber's envelope ... Why not send us \$3 today as a Xmas present. We'll be glad to send you 12 big issues of THE LITTLE SANDY in return. Complete information on the back cover.

CURRENT AND CHOICE

AS I ROVED OUT (Field Trip -- Ireland)
Collected by Jean Ritchie and George
Pickow. (Folkways 8872)

Fine field recordings by one of our
finest folksingers.

SHIRLEY ELIZABETH COLLINS: SWEET
ENGLAND (Argo 150) An English record.

As Alan Lomax says: "here is the
wistful and tender magic of the
young girl, that is beyond art."

EWAN MacCOLL & PEGGY SEEGER: NEW
BRITON GAZETTE (Folkways 8732)

Two of the best folksingers in
the world sing their own compositions.

SONGS OF MEMPHIS SLIM AND WILLIE
DIXON (Folkways 2385)

City blues done right by two of
its best exponents.

JOHN LEE HOOKER: THE FOLK BLUES OF
JOHN LEE HOOKER (Riverside 12-838)
and THAT'S MY STORY: JOHN LEE HOOKER
SINGS THE BLUES (Riverside 12-321)

Blues reviewer Dave Glover stands
firmly behind these as John Lee's
finest recorded work.

BILL McADOO: BILL McADOO SINGS
(Folkways 2448)

A young man with a cause --
and the most important young Negro
folksinger in years.

LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

3220 Park Avenue South
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EDITED BY JON PANKAKE & PAUL NELSON

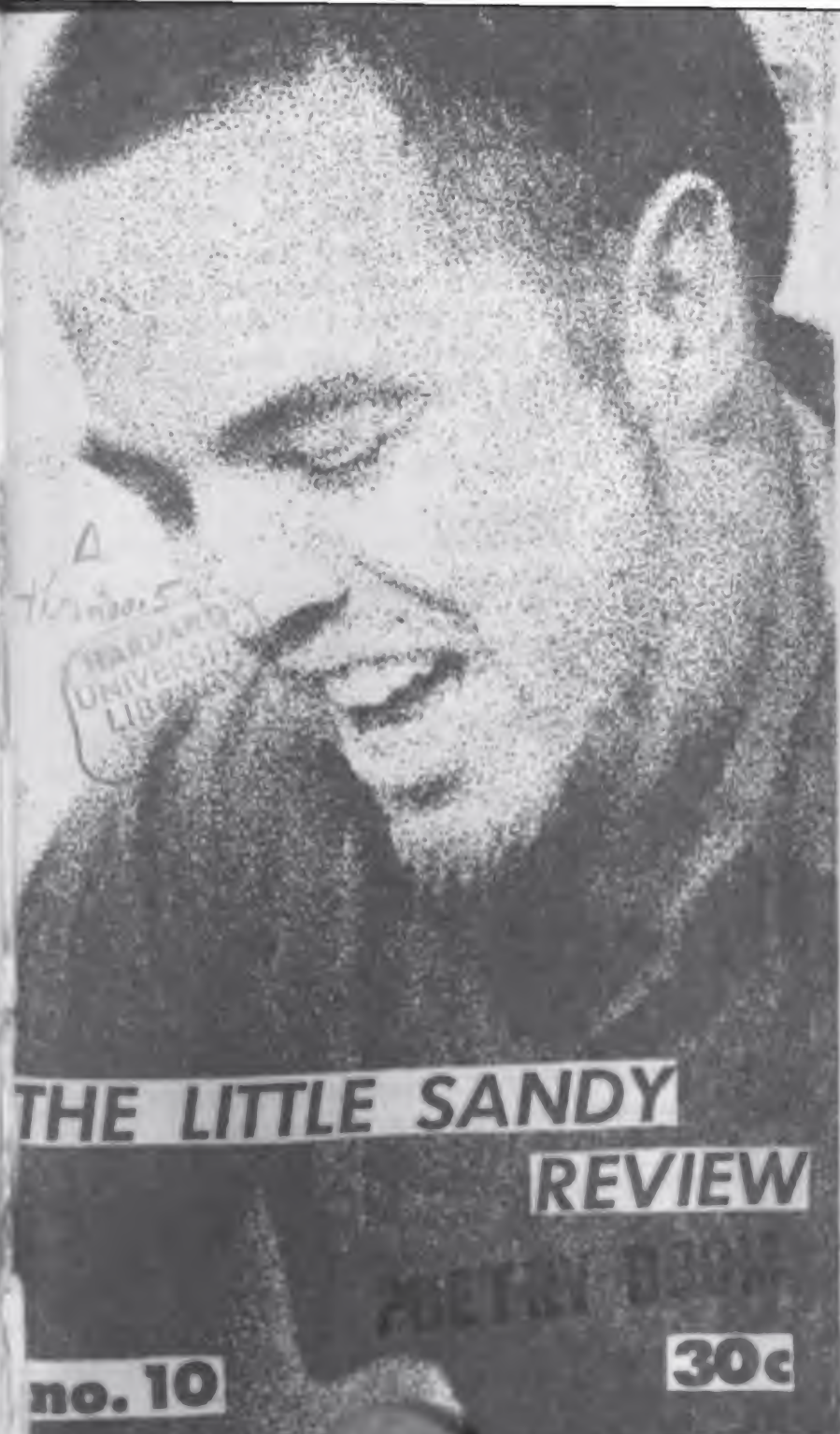
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**THE LITTLE SANDY
REVIEW**

no. 10

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On our cover this month is Alan Lomax. Need we say more. Mr. Lomax has recently written what is perhaps the definitive folksong anthology ("an anthology of anthologies," he calls it), THE FOLKSONGS OF NORTH AMERICA (Doubleday), and has edited and collected the most monumental set of folk LP's since the Folkways Anthology: a 7-volume set for Atlantic Records called THE SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES. See reviews in this issue. Cover photo by John Cohen.

EDITORS' COLUMN

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BY JON PAVLAKE & PAUL NELSON

A few editorial quickies: Bonnie Dobson (who recently charmed local folk fans at The Padded Cell) will have a record out on Prestige this spring. Watch for it ... Guy Carawan and Bill McAdoo have teamed up for concerts and will work the West Coast in March ... In lieu of our usual back cover plea for subscribers, we hereby get down on our knees right in the middle of the editors' column and beg you to send that \$3 today to LSR, 3220 Park Ave. So., Minneapolis 7, Minnesota. We'll give you 12 top-notch issues for it.

"I have been recording folk music of the world for over twenty-five years, and in the summer of 1959 I returned to my native South with hi-fi stereo equipment to offer the singers of mountain, bayou, prison, and cotton patch the best of modern sound technology ... In a two-month tour which took me from Virginia through the middle South, to the Ozarks and back to the Georgia Sea Islands, I found proof enough that the South still holds a rich heritage of musical tradition and continues to produce new folk music ... Out of eighty hours of recordings, the material for these seven LPs was chosen ... The whole collection is a testament to the folk tradition of the Southern states where the country folk -- Negro and white -- continue to sing the deep songs of our country."

ALAN LOMAX

SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES (Atlantic) Sounds of the South (1346), Blue Ridge Mountain Music (1347), Roots of the Blues (1348), White Spirituals (1349), American Folk Songs for Children (1350), Negro Church Music (1351), The Blues Roll On (1352). A seven-volume survey. Available as individual LPs in Monaural (\$4.95) or Stereo (\$5.95); or boxed as a complete set in Monaural (\$29.95) or Stereo (\$34.95). Each album contains a four-page descriptive booklet prepared by the editor of the series, Mr. Alan Lomax.

SOUNDS OF THE SOUTH (Atlantic 1346)

After an absence of fifteen years, Alan Lomax has returned to the South to once again dip his hands, with daring and authoritativeness, into the raw, rhapsodic stuff of American folk music. His vision has produced a set of LPs, of which this is the first, of the utmost importance -- a survey of the surviving musical traditions of the region. The magnificence of the set as a whole can be approached on equal footing only by the Folkways Anthology; and, indeed, the aims of both Lomax and Moe Asch were similar in producing the sets. Asch, of course, attempted to survey the whole of American folk music via the documentation of early commercial recordings. Lomax has limited himself to a regional survey of field recordings. The picture of the South that emerges from Lomax's efforts seems almost Faulkneresque -- an image of America at its most vigorous and most decadent; a documentation of a region of our country where Americans can still be innocent and childlike in a wasteland of grotesque guilt and quick violence; where religion is yet a passionate and participatory group ritual; America's "last real frontier," as a leading civil rights crusader has called it. A distillation of the broadness of the entire survey is presented on this initial disc -- a microcosm of the macrocosm yet to come

in the following discs.

Among the more dazzling inclusions on the record (and the set as well) are the new recordings Lomax has made of some of his favorite informants from the pre-war glory days of collecting. Mr. E. C. Ball and Vera Hall are revisited, for example, on SOUNDS OF THE SOUTH. Vera sings a near-ballad, BOLL WEEVIL HOLLER, and a rudimentary spiritual, TROUBLE SO HARD, in the manner that has brought her recognition as one of America's greatest singers. Mr. Ball, whose performing will be discussed fully in the review of #1349, contributes THE FARMER'S CURST WIFE. The white traditional music to come is further represented by Neil Morris, discussing the Ozark Jesse James legend and singing the ballad -- plus two dance lyrics. Mr. Morris is Jimmy Driftwood's father, and Lomax says "the neighbors argue about which is the better mountain singer." To my city ears, there is no contest -- the winner is the elder Morris by a decisive margin. The sprightly Mountain Ramblers of Galax, Virginia, discussed in the following review, contribute a bluegrass JESSE JAMES as a balance to the more old-time PADDY ON THE TURNPIKE played by Wade Ward on banjo and Charley Higgins on fiddle -- who are a combined 157 years young and who can, with their taste and adherence to tradition, still top the more frenetic

sound of the youngsters. Closing the mountain selections is a wonderful Vernon Dalhart-oriented rendition of KENNY WAGNER by Bob Carpenter of Galax, whose introductory patter ("..finally he run away to Tazewell, Arkansas, and while he was there, a woman sheriff captured him. My, isn't that something?") is the epitome of "hillbilly" charm and wit.

The preview of religious music begins with a passionately hair-raising recording of a baptism, and then plays off the pre-Gospel style of IS THERE ANYBODY HERE THAT LOVE MY JESUS? against the soaring WINDHAM of the incredible Alabama Sacred Harp Singers. (The sheets of sound produced by these groups can be best appreciated in stereo.) Lomax has unearthed a splendid disciple of the songs and style of Willie Johnson in Fred McDowell of Mississippi; and his KEEP YOUR LAMPS TRIMMED AND BURNING displays a razor-sharp "knife" guitar technique.

A variety of primitive Negro dance music and blues closes the record. HEN DUCK is played by a cane fife-and-bass drum duo whose music is so nearly African that its survival until the present amazed even Lomax. There is a number played on pan pipes by a blind elder (shades of classic mythology!), and

blues and work songs recorded en scene at the Parchman, Miss., prison farm. The scope of the record should make it the first on your purchase list if you are buying the set on a one-at-a-time basis -- both because of its importance as a self-contained survey, and its role as a sampler of the contents of the remainder of the set.

BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN MUSIC (Atlantic 1347)

Lomax seems to have lamented for some years the absence of an American folk orchestral tradition that would place our music on a level with that established by the great folk orchestras of the Slavic and Latin countries. He has elsewhere described his disappointment of 20 years ago, when he attempted to get serious American composers to incorporate folk elements into their work: "..his composition spoke for the Paris of Nadia Boulanger, and not for the wild land and the heart-torn people who had made the song ... As the years have gone by, I have found less and less value in the symphonizing of folk song. Each tradition has its own place in the scheme of mankind's needs, but their forced marriage produces puny offspring." Thus, Lomax has embraced the rise of Bluegrass as the long-awaited Anglo-American folk orchestral style.

Nine of the fourteen selections of BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN MUSIC are devoted to the

efforts of The Mountain Ramblers, an amateur string band Lomax discovered in Galax, Virginia -- that musically jewelled section of America that immediately arouses in the folk song lover images of Texas Gladden, Hobart Smith, the Ward family, the Bogtrotters' Band, and the first recording sessions of the Carter Family. Lomax says of the Ramblers: "...its members are young and seriously devoted to the tradition of mountain music. They know the techniques and the tunes of their forebears and, at the same time, they are aware of the development of hillbilly music In my opinion, they stand for a new wave in American music, far more important than the city folkniks, the Paris-oriented longhairs, the self-conscious "cool" men and the weary technicians of Tin Pan Alley. They have a new orchestral form to play with and a mature singing style, and they are enjoying themselves." And the Ramblers are as good as Lomax says they are. The superb fidelety of the recordings will fill your home with some wonderful music -- and if you have stereo, you will think all hell has broken loose in your rooms! Since the Ramblers were field recorded, they haven't yet had the advantages, to use the term satirically, of echo chambers, A & R men, and such -- and their music is refreshingly home-made in sound. The vocalists of the group are Cullen Galyen, a brilliant bluegrass

fiddler, and Thurman Pugh, who punishes a bass fiddle in fine, whomping style. The lead banjo work of Charles Hawks is among the most basic you will hear -- he has neither the speed nor smoothness of a Scruggs or Reno, nor the encyclopedic variety of right hand movements of a Walt Hensley (but then, who does?), and he is content to restrict himself to simple variations on a basic three-finger pattern well-known to most banjo pickers. The group as a whole is much more typically sober and straightlaced in approach than most of the pro groups. They have fun, of course, but they eschew the calculated showmanship of outfits like, say, the Stoney Mountain Boys, who, at their farthest-out moments, border on a burlesque rather than an interpretation of mountain music. The Ramblers step out high, wide, and handsomest on BIG BALL IN BOSTON -- obviously influenced by the Mainer Mountaineer classic, but lacking the deliciously shady verses of the latter. ROSEWOOD CASKET, LIZA JANE, COTTEN EYED JOE, BIG TILDA, and other numbers are likewise done in fine fashion. But the group illustrates the shortcomings (one might say the downright evils) of the bluegrass orchestral style -- as well as the advantages.

The bluegrass format is not flexible enough to encompass a part of the Anglo-American tradition that I consider the

most important -- and I mean the gentle airs, the old ballads, and the "lovin'" songs. A prime example of this failure of bluegrass is illustrated by the Ramblers' stylistically horrible rendition of SHADY GROVE -- wherein one of the very sweetest of all American songs is ungraciously ripped from its quaint and lyric modal setting and cruelly jammed into the alien hell-for-leather bluegrass mold. An orchestral format for such songs as THE HOUSE CARPENTER, THE DROWSY SLEEPER, LADY GAY, etc. yet remains to be devised -- perhaps by some country or city musicians who will start experimenting from scratch with banjo-dulcimore or banjo-autoharp combinations. (A recording of PRETTY SARO by Peggy Seeger and Guy Carawan with banjo and recorder may seem significant in this light.)

But probably because my ear and taste are definitely reactionary, I must admit I was most taken with the remaining five numbers on the album -- holdovers of the ancient Anglo-American solo tradition of performing. The very best of these numbers is a tune new to me called JIMMY SUTTON, and performed by Spence Moore of Tennessee as a guitar-vocal dance number -- complete with tongue-twisting lyrics and interjections of "Swang 'er, there, bwoy!" Nearly as

good is the instrumental solo of CHILLY WINDS offered by Wade Ward, Lomax's favorite banjo picker, whose excellence lies, as Lomax points out, in his approach to and understanding of the music rather than in the dexterity of his fingers.

"When he plays, you realize that the real secret of musicianship lies .. in the message that each note carries. Each of Wade's notes comes straight from his warm and wise old heart, and his tunes are like a loving conversation on a summer afternoon." City pickers need look no farther for a style of frailing to model their own after. Hobart Smith's fiddle (JOHN BROWN) and banjo (POOR ELLEN SMITH) solos and the JENNIE JENKINS duet of Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Ball further demonstrate the fine-drawn brilliance of the mountain singer's polished, heartwarming artistry. Capping off this album are Lomax's notes -- containing a concise summary of the development of modern mountain music from the colonial reels to the Golden Age of hill-billy recordings and into the modern era.

ROOTS OF THE BLUES (Atlantic 1348)

For years the great majority of American folklorists have taken for granted that there are virtually no new traditional blues singers in the South. Until now, they have had precious little evidence to the contrary -- there has been Harry Oster's fine work in Louisiana and virtually

nothing else. Now, for the first time since Alan Lomax and his father collected for the Library of Congress many years ago, a comprehensive survey of Negro music in the South has been made and its results published on records. It cannot be denied that traditional blues singing is far less widespread than it once was, but Lomax has proven to us with these magnificent recordings that it is far from dead. This LP ranks with the best ever made.

Lomax did not discover another Leadbelly. The interest in this disc lies not so much with the actual performers but in the documentation of a living ethnic tradition. ROOTS OF THE BLUES is nothing less than a history of folk blues -- on one LP. The first track is an entrancing Mississippi version of African chanting; the last track is in the style of the 45 rpm records you can still buy today in many Negro record shops -- and almost every style which has come in along the way is included.

To many listeners, the most exciting thing on the record will be the chanting and drumming of the Young brothers, who perform three selections. Lomax feels that their music is an extremely close link to Africa and that it may be "the only complete and living document that hints at the glories of Negro music in the South before the days of the minstrel shows." Its similarity to African music

-- and to the earliest recordings of the rhythm-&-blues singer Bo Diddley -- is immediately apparent, and the music itself is infectious.

The "holler" is represented here by the best unaccompanied Negro singer alive -- Vera Hall, famous for ANOTHER MAN DONE GONE. Here she does THE WILD OX MOAN. A rudimentary guitar accompaniment, with open tuning, is the next step, and an example of this is performed by one of the most remarkable of Lomax's discoveries, a north Mississippi farmer named Fred McDowell. There is an ancient play-party tune played on the fiddle, and then the combination of dance and slow-blues traditions into the fast blues, performed again by McDowell. Many of these archaic styles of performances, now current only in extremely small localities, have never before been adequately represented on records. Their reproduction on this disc is invaluable.

We are next introduced to a very fine singer and harmonica player from Hughes, Arkansas, the late Forest City Joe. In Lomax's words: "A whole quart of whiskey went down his throat, and out of it came two amazing folk poems." Both of them are on this record, and they are intense improvisations composed of fragments of songs, monologues, and terrific harp playing in the style of Joe's idol, the first of the

two professional blues singers named Sonny Boy Williamson. This is not the blues at its most artistic, but it is the blues at its most personal; and listening to it is a treasurable experience.

There are two recordings of prison work songs, a tradition which Lomax feels is dying out. The record concludes with a pair of blues whose style represents the vast bulk of commercial blues recordings. The first, by Fred McDowell, is typical of the country singers who recorded in the 20's and 30's. The second, by Forest City Joe with guitar and drums, is in a style favored from the late thirties to the present day.

This is an LP of unparalleled importance. Other albums by better-known singers, to be sure, exceed it artistically and emotionally. For historical and documentary interest, however, this set is absolutely unmatched. Lomax's notes are informative, lively, and appreciative -- rarely stuffy, though occasionally sentimental. The recording is, with Oster's, the best ever made of Negro music on location -- and it is available in stereo! Don't buy another blues LP until you have this one.
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

WHITE SPIRITUALS (Atlantic 1349)

Here, in one superb volume, Alan Lomax has attempted a musical survey of white spiritual singing in the South today. Offerings range all the way from two modern Bluegrass numbers all the way back to the four-part "shape-note" singing of the Alabama Sacred Harp Singers and a "lining" hymn and sermon recorded in a Baptist church in Kentucky. E. C. Ball, the featured singer on eight of the fourteen numbers, is heard singing both traditional spirituals and spirituals of his own composition (it is very hard to tell where one leaves off and the other begins). Mr. Ball, who had recorded for Lomax and The Library of Congress in the 30's, "had grown graver and far more impressive," Lomax tells us. "His voice had deepened and his guitar playing had assumed..expertness..There was no fuss or nervousness about recording on his part. It was as if he had been preparing for my visit for a decade." Of Mr. Ball's eight numbers, my favorites are LONESOME VALLEY (beautifully sung with his wife, Orna), FATHER ADIEU (a ballad-like family parting song, very moving, and his own composition), TRIBULATIONS (fine old mountain harmony group singing), and a solo WHEN I GET HOME (in which guitar and vocal styling make him sound like a white Gary Davis). Estil Ball was one of the finest singers recorded for The Library of Congress, and it is indeed a pleasure to hear him again -- older, but, in a way, more masterful than ever. Lomax says: "No question that Mr. Ball has acquired much sophistica-

tion..but he is so much a mountain musician and so devoted to the most serious aspects of his heritage..that he has arrived at a sophisticated style of his own that enhances his favorite folk songs." In any case, the singing of E. C. Ball in this and other LP's in this set is surely one of the high points of the entire series.

Also included here is a spellbinding sermon and "lining" hymn preached and led by Rev. I. D. Back, minister of a Kentucky Baptist church. One must hear it in stereo to get the full effect, but, even in monorual, it is a most moving experience. Also a must in stereo are the two songs (ANTIOCH and CALVARY) by the Alabama Sacred Harp Singers, who sing in four-part horizontal "shape-note" style, with "the vocal attack and decorations of the rural white ballad singer." CALVARY is their best number: a soaring choral effort that stirs the listener deeply.

To round the set off, we have a wonderfully delicate version of LITTLE MOSES sung by Neil Morris (Jimmy Driftwood's father): a perfect performance of a beautiful and simple folk religious ballad complete with gentle guitar accompaniment and warm, winning singing. It is perhaps the finest thing on the LP. The Mountain Ramblers wind things up with two modern Bluegrass old-timey religious numbers which drip with delightful nostalgia: THE OLD COUNTRY CHURCH and, far better, BAPTIZING DOWN BY THE CREEK. All in all, Lomax has here completed a most

successful survey, and the results certainly merit a place in every serious folk collection.

AMERICAN FOLK SONGS FOR CHILDREN (Atlantic 1350)

Of this record, Lomax says: "The jingles, riddles, silly ballads, wistful lullabies, jiggy tunes and game songs belonging to the children of the American frontier will one day make a book far more warm and witty than the traditional Mother Goose. Here we can only suggest its contents..Those who wish to compare what the illiterate and rough-handed folk poets have made for their kids to the pap of the Little Golden Books and the junk of the radio jingles, will agree with me that the People's Mother Goose is good and golden, and the Mother Goose of Madison Avenue is, by contrast, vapid and lifeless. The best song-makers for children are the folk, whose rhymes are rubbed clean and hard against the bone of life, whose fantasies are heart-warming and fertile because they rise out of billions of accumulated hours of living with and caring for children. My hope is that you will put this record on your machine for your children before they can walk. Let them grow up with it, so that these songs can tie them with many invisible bonds to the childhood of this country."

These are fine words, and, while AMERICAN FOLK SONGS FOR CHILDREN certainly offers a most delightful and rib-tickling time for

the kids, it also provides a most important addition to any serious collection of white Southern Mountain music. For on this album (the only one of the "white" LP's in this set that Lomax considers "pure folk"), we find five songs by the singer who Lomax believes to be "the finest native ballad singer I've heard since I met Texas Gladden" -- Mrs. Almeda Riddle; four foot-stomping numbers by the J. E. Mainer Band (nee J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers); two banjo pieces and a guitar-vocal number by Hobart Smith; a self-composed children's song by the incomparable Mrs. Texas Gladden herself; a lovely mountain duet of PAPER OF PINS by E. C. and Orna Ball; and a wild and reckless OLD JOE CLARK by the Mountain Ramblers. Add to this several fine numbers by Bessie Jones (of the Georgia Sea Islands) and some Negro game songs by a group from Como, Mississippi, and you have an aural treat that will dazzle and captivate any self-respecting child or adult who enjoys fine music and scintillating sounds from our American heritage.

Side One of this multi-varied tapestry of rural talent "is a concert, split between the J. E. Mainer Bluegrass Band of Concord, N. C., and Almeda Riddle of Heber Springs, Ark." Mrs. Riddle (who, Lomax tells us, has "sung ballads since childhood" and displays "the taste of a trained critic" in the selection of her repertoire) offers three charming animal folk songs

(MY LITTLE ROOSTER, FROG WENT A-COURTIN', AUNT NANCY) that abound in natural fun and innocence and should go straight to the heart of any child. Folk scholars and adult listeners will find much to admire in the singing of Mrs. Riddle also: they may listen, with rapt attention, to one of our finest exponents of the style of mountain singing, and may, with Lomax, be amazed at Mrs. Riddle's version of AUNT NANCY, which combines the elements of three songs that Lomax had hitherto believed to be completely separate in text and origin: AUNT NANCY, THE GRAY GOOSE, and OLD ROGER. Mrs. Riddle also sings two other numbers (CHICK-A-LI-LEE-LO and MAMA BUY ME A CHINEY DOLL) so filled with goodness and folk feeling that one cannot help but agree with Lomax that "the People's Mother Goose is indeed good and golden."

Collectors of 78rpm recordings of J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers (there is an excellent selection of them on King LP 666) may well express legitimate surprise in hearing that there still exists a J. E. Mainer mountain string-band, and that this new band plays equally as well as the old. "J. E. Mainer..recorded many of the finest sides in the history of mountain music in the Thirties," Lomax tells us in his notes. Now, we must add at least two songs recorded in 1959 to this list of all-time greats of recorded mountain music. For the new Mainer rendition of JOHNSON'S OLD GRAY MULE

ought to delight both the record collector of the '30's and the modern folk listener with its old-timey country sound, and TRAIN 111, perhaps the finest string-band offering in the entire set of LP's, is the epitome of the old-time wonderfulness and magic of the rural string-band: fiddle flying, banjo picking, etc., in a lonesome, yet rollicking, fiddle-and-banjo train blues that will have you playing it over and over again before you go on to the next number. The Mainer Band also contributes a fine instrumental offering of WHOA THERE MULE (featuring banjoist Glenn Mainer) and a Glenn Mainer composition "which should set all the kids jigging" called GLENN'S CHIMES, which is a bit bluegrassy, but not at all frenetic. The Mountain Ramblers' 53-second bombshell version of OLD JOE CLARK rounds off Side One.

Side Two contains a little bit of everything and everyone. Bessie Jones starts things off with a remarkably rhythmic JOHNNY CUCKOO (what Jean Ritchie song does this remind you of?) that is so filled with vocal coloration that you must hear it in stereo to get the full effect. Mrs. Riddle then does CHINEY DOLL, and Hobart Smith plays and sings a wonderful SOLDIER, SOLDIER, extending his trilogy of instruments from fiddle and banjo to include guitar as well. Then come four Negro children's numbers split between Bessie Jones and a trio from Mississippi.

(continued on page 43)

NEGRO-CHURCH-MUSIC (Atlantic 1351)

"Nothing else in American folk music, and indeed little else in the folk music of the world, can match the Negro spiritual," declares Lomax. This LP lacks the uniqueness of #1348, for (with one important exception) all the styles represented here can be heard on various other recordings. But it is wonderful to have the diversity of styles presented here all on one disc, and it is good to hear a new recording of congregation singing -- as spiritual singing is becoming largely a solo art.

The fourteen selections are all exciting, and with Lomax's notes the record makes a fine guide to the appreciation of the spiritual. Solo singing by the incomparable Vera Hall and by James Shorty (the latter in the style of Blind Willie Johnson) opens the album. Shorty is not quite the match of Folk-Lyric's Rev. Pearly Brown but is well worth hearing. Later in the album come refreshing traditional renditions of THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE and MOTHERLESS CHILDREN, the latter also featuring solo singing. A fine performance by the Young brothers (see #1348) is also included.

The important exception mentioned above, and the most remarkable thing on the album, is the singing of the St. Simon's Island (off the Georgia coast) Singers. This choir, Lomax feels, comes closest to the

style of the great age of the spiritual, a century ago. I'M GONNA SAIL LIKE A SHIP ON THE OCEAN is sung beautifully, sensitively, undecoratively; without the rowdiness of more modern folk Negro performances or the Europeanizations of the Fisk Jubilee Singers or of Paul Robeson.

The remainder of the album consists mainly of the singing of various church congregations in more recent styles, with a brief fragment of a beautiful melodic sermon. This is similar to what is heard in Volume II of the Folkways Anthology of American Folk Music (JUDGMENT, I'M ON THE BATTLEFIELD FOR MY LORD) and on many 45's and 78's, old and new. (For sermons: the Rev. C. L. Franklin on Chess LP's). You can hear this in hundreds of Negro churches in the South and in a surprisingly large number in the North -- here it is, beautifully recorded in Memphis and Mississippi. Since spiritual music (with the exception of the very oldest styles) is so well documented on commercial records (much better than is blues), this LP cannot be said to have the historical importance of the others, but it is nonetheless very well done and fine listening -- as well as an indispensable part of the SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE survey as a whole. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

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THE BLUES ROLL ON (Atlantic 1352)

This is a fine survey, more in depth than in breadth, of current folk blues styles in the rural South. These singers are singing the music that their audiences are enjoying and calling for right now. Influences of radio and records are quite discernable, but the spirit is one of deep tradition. Featured artist is the late Forest City Joe, to whom the album is a sort of memorial. He appears on about half of the numbers -- usually singing and playing harp with guitar and drum backing. Joe's style is so close to that of the first Sonny Boy Williamson (who made many 78's for Bluebird and Victor in the 1940's) that it is very hard for me to believe that I am not hearing Sonny Boy himself. Familiar turns and phrases come right after another, but this is part of the blues, and the singing and playing is no less moving for it. This album affords a chance for an extremely interesting comparison with another singer who also has taken the first Sonny Boy for an idol, to the extent of actually calling himself (the second) Sonny Boy Williamson. (This man's work is on a Chess LP). Most of the differences between Joe and Sonny Boy II can be traced to the situations in which they recorded -- basically the two men are very similar, and are mutually similar to the first Sonny Boy. On THE BLUES ROLL ON, Forest City Joe also plays

a number on piano, Leadbelly's RED CROSS STORE, crudely but with a marvelous drive to which the technically proficient but overdecorative pianists who are working with the Chicago singers at present would do well to listen.

Besides Forest City Joe, several other fine singers with more primitive styles are included. Fred McDowell and the Young brothers (see ROOTS OF THE BLUES) do encores in this set. Mrs. Rosalie Hill sings the blues like a man. There is a marvelous recording of a prisoner at Parchman, Miss., singing and playing guitar in the style which gave rise to the music of Robert Johnson and, later, of Muddy Waters. Here it is unelectricified and with its original color intact. Historically, this album is an appendix to ROOTS OF THE BLUES, and less valuable as a standard folk recording than #1348. Devotees of the blues, however, will find it immensely enjoyable, and it can be very strongly recommended. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

* * * *

Here then is Alan Lomax's musical survey of the South -- a towering inspiration to both the neophyte and veteran folk record collector. To the casual or initiate, all the names and singers will be fresh experiences. But to the dedicated student, several names appearing in the set will have a special meaning -- E. C.

Ball, Texas Gladden, Hobart Smith, and Vera Hall. The following commentary on these singers is NOT meant to disparage them or their performances on these records. It's just that those of us who have known and studied with loving fascination these voices -- veiled until now in a thick, 20-year-old coating of surface scratch -- for so long have, unconsciously I think, made them into legends in our own mind's eye; have tended to mentally and emotionally place them in a never-never land of beautiful people and song where time was lost when the Lomaxes packed up their ancient disc recorder in the long ago. Thus, these new, probing, stereophonic recordings jolt us with the realization that our heroes are not only mortal, but are aging and fading away like so many burning altar candles. We nostalgically resent even the slightest inroads that time has made on these voices: despair that Mr. Ball no longer hits those resonant low notes so often; pine over the decay of the pure, angelic voices of Vera Hall and Mrs. Gladden -- now ever so slightly dimmer and a bit frayed around the edges with age and wear. The more sentimental of us have difficulty in facing the knowledge that when these singers are gone, they shall have taken a part of America with them, and their kind will never be seen on the face of the earth again. We

are extremely grateful for this opportunity to hear them once again -- but we fear mightily that it may be our last.

BOOK REVIEW

THE FOLK SONGS OF NORTH AMERICA, by Alan Lomax. 640 pages, 7½ x 10½, \$7.50 (Doubleday)

At the convention of the American Anthropological Association in Minneapolis last month, Alan Lomax said, "I think the most important thing I ever did was to help Leadbelly and Woody move into a sort of urban setting where their works could be brought to the American people." Add to this Lomax's earlier statement that "the main point of my activity was to put.. sound technology at the disposal of the folk, to bring channels of communication to all sorts of artists and areas ... it still remains for us to.. put our magnificent mass communication technology at the service of each and every branch of the human family. If it continues to be aimed in only one direction -- from our semi-literate western, urban society to all the 'underdeveloped' billions who still speak and sing in their many special

languages and dialects, the effect in the end can only mean a catastrophic cultural disaster for us all...", and you have his own definition of his work -- and his credo. THE FOLKSONGS OF NORTH AMERICA, which was preceded to the sales counters by his Atlantic LP anthology, is the latest manifestation of this attempt by Lomax to make our urban, industrial society understand and respect the culture of our soil. It is certainly the biggest thing ever to hit the field of folksong publications under the Lomax name -- more than a song collection; more than a historical, philosophical, and psychological exploration of American folk music; and more than a musical analysis. It is, as its advertising claims, virtually a one-volume encyclopedia of American folk song, containing everything from maps of folk song style areas in North America (indispensable for study of Library of Congress recordings) to essays and instructions on playing folk-style guitar and banjo; from discographies and bibliographies to original analyses of folksinging method and style.

Please disregard the exterior appearance of the book. Doubleday has tried to give it the appearance of an ordinary song collection, since it is apparently impossible to sell a folk song book that doesn't loudly proclaim on its jacket that it con-

tains all-time favorites such as JOHN HENRY, SHENANDOAH, BARBARA ALLEN, SWEET BETSY, CHISHOLM TRAIL, and all the other old chestnuts that can be found in practically any songbook. Of course, these veterans must be included in a comprehensive collection -- but usually at the expense of the exclusion of lesser known songs that are not as easily come by in print; songs such as HOT CORN COLD CORN, HIRAM HUBBARD, WAY DOWN THE RIVER BOYS, MARY FAGAN, for example. But once INSIDE the covers of the book, you will quickly discover that you are in good hands. For an example of how good a prose stylist Lomax is, scan the background material on Joe Hill on pages 411-412, or the pages of comment on chain gang songs, or any of the moving introductory pages in the prologue. And to see just how deeply Lomax has gone into his material, read the chapter of analysis of the Anglo-American ballads; wherein he attempts to account for the incredible hold these songs have on the mountain mind by viewing them as dreamwork and fantasy. And where Lomax doesn't choose his own commentary to explain a song, he uses liberal quotes from his informants to do so. Thus, the section of Woody's songs contains almost 3 pages of Woody's own comments -- the best imaginable setting for the songs. Each of the book's 317 songs has from a paragraph to two pages of such explanation.

Being an amateur guitar picker, I was highly pleased with the excellently simple, tasteful, and folk-like guitar/banjo chord arrangements of Peggy Seeger's. I recently found a favorite song of mine transcribed in a folk journal with the following chord sequence contained in 16 measures of a fast, spirited song: Dm-Gm-Dm-Gm-Dm-Gm-C-Dm-Bflat-Am-Gm-C7-F-Gm-Dm-Gm-C-Bflat-Am-Gm-C7-A7-Dm-C-Dm -- enough to tax the resources of practically any guitarist less accomplished than Segovia! The home-made instrumentalist will have no such frustrations with Peggy's music. Since I don't play the piano (and don't like to hear folk music played on it), I am not qualified to comment on the piano arrangements of Matyas Seiber and Don Banks. I'm sure they are, as piano arrangements go, very good; but I would surmise that they appear due to the insistence, for saleability's sake, of Doubleday -- since I am certain Lomax knows that one just can't play the likes of LADY GAY and HARD TRAVELIN' on the piano.

Don't think, though, that there won't be voices raised against THE FOLKSONGS OF NORTH AMERICA. There will be -- and they will be the same voices that appear out of nowhere to disparage everything that Lomax does: the pious voices of the pseudo-folklorists, self-made scholars, and the would-be Lomaxes who gather in little groups to make snide, sourgrapes jokes about the Messiah of American Folk Music who decides singlehandedly what the Gospel of American

Folk Music shall be and proceeds to dictate it to the American public. These people, who doubtless would never have heard any American folk music without the efforts of Lomax, resent the fact that Lomax is a creative and energetic man who must put his own mark on his work, and who thus selects, arranges, collates, and edits his collected material (and then copyrights it) in order to make it understandable, acceptable, meaningful, and available to a middle-class city market -- and purity be damned. It is the "Collected and Arranged by Alan Lomax" tag on many of the songs in this book that will irk them the most. "Why can't he keep his damn thumb out of the soup and just give us documentation?" they cry. "Why are so many of the songs in this book credited 'As sung by Peggy Seeger' -- an admitted eclectic and a city musician who revamps folk material in as good a manner as is possible, but who nevertheless seldom sings a song in a pure form?" They will find that song #120 in the book, SHADY GROVE, has the tune collected from a Kentucky singer but the text (a different one) lifted from Journal of American Folklore. "But SHADY GROVE exists in innumerable versions in oral tradition," objects the purist. "Why not give us a verbatim transcription of ANY ethnic version rather than this put-up-job that probably never even existed until Lomax created it?" They will then find CHARLES GUILTEAU and

OMIE WISE credited to the Victor hillbilly recordings of Kelly Harrell and G. B. Grayson -- but mysteriously different and uncredited lyrics to the songs included. They will look up song #88, THE HOUSE CARPENTER, and find it "Collected by Alan Lomax from Texas Gladden." They they will put on their Gladden record of the song, consult the written music, and find that Lomax's printed version is NOT an accurate transcription of Mrs. Gladden's version. They will absolutely froth at the mouth! But all this is beside the point. The point is that thousands of Americans will be reading a good version of THE HOUSE CARPENTER who never even heard of Texas Gladden -- and who never will. A good many of these thousands will be singing the song, and a few dozen may even be intrigued enough by it to look up the credited source and thereby be introduced to Gladden's singing. And Lomax has struck his blow for American folk music. For he writes, of course, for the layman and not for the fan who has already begun serious study of source materials, etc. Here, Lomax's writing, while soundly based on scholarship and experience, is LYRIC rather than scholarly per se. I, for one, will stand behind Lomax's taste and judgment in guiding Americans into a knowledge of their all-but-forgotten heritage -- for no one is more

able or qualified in such a capacity than Lomax. And there is no better general folk music book in the field than THE FOLKSONGS OF NORTH AMERICA. Nowhere else can one find so much valuable material between two covers. The folk public will, if my guess is right, race out in droves to buy the book -- and they will will profit mightily by doing so. And, since the would-be Lomaxes themselves will have to buy the book also, if for no other reason than to be able to pick it apart, I will have to say that THE FOLKSONGS OF NORTH AMERICA is, beyond a shadow of a doubt, the one indispensable book in the folk song field.

It not only belongs on every folk bookshelf, it will be for many a folk music bookshelf in itself. It is difficult to imagine what even Lomax can do to top this one.

BLUEGRASS AND COUNTRY collectors are advised to hustle a letter off to Jimmie Skinner, 222 E. 5th St., Cincinnati 2, asking for the coupon that will enable them to order Jimmie's big BLUEGRASS SPECIAL package offer for only \$2.98. You will get fine, hi-fi EPs containing 24 songs representing a good cross-section of currently popular country groups and performers. Recommended by LSR.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER

Pretty slim pickin's this month. To wit:

Casey Anderson: GOIN' PLACES (Elektra 192). He's not going where LSR wants him to.

Eileen Donaghy: IRELAND, MY IRELAND (Epic, 18004).

Marg Osburn: A CENTURY OF FOLKSONGS (Rodeo International 100). The Canadian label.

The Limelitters: THE LIMELITERS -- IN PERSON (RCA-Victor). The Liters making their bid for the big time.

* * * * *

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

(Wherein LSR receives bouquets, dodges brickbats, and unashamedly drops names.)

A WORD FROM MALVINA ...

Dear Little Sandy: I assumed, perhaps incorrectly, that your readers would be aware, as I am, of Woody's illness. The remarkable thing to me is that he is able to communicate, even under these circumstances, in so characteristic and poetic a way, so valid and moving. I offered the correspondence not as a curio but as the expression of a man still functioning, in illness, in a way true to his genius. I am sorry if it was misunderstood. Yours sincerely,

MALVINA REYNOLDS
Berkeley, Calif.

Editors' Note: Mrs. Reynolds need not feel bad. As a contributor to a Guthrie Tribute, she certainly could have expected Woody's condition to be made known in the tribute. The fact that it was not is due to the oversight and not the ignorance of the Editors. We feel the same way about the letters that Mrs. Reynolds does, and they were printed in the spirit in which they were offered.

GREENWAY AND A LESSON IN HUMILITY ...

Gentlemen: While I shall always rank high in my list of accomplishments, regardless of what heights my career may yet attain, the fact that I reduced the editors of THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW to what even Godfrey would call humility, I hasten to assure you that not even I took your tribute to Woody in bad stead, and no apology was necessary. If you knew me better you would have paid no attention to my notorious irascibility. You see, I have an ulcer and am too miserly to buy Gelusils. With continued solicitude for your health and sanity,

JOHN GREENWAY
Los Angeles, Calif.

Editors' Note: Who's Godfrey?

ORCHIL'S FROM BOSTON ...

Gentlemen: ..You have produced an envi-

able little publication with enough intrinsic value to rate with the best in its field. It is by no means a "mess", this type of snobbery smacks of the status seeking reviewer, i. e. one who is easily impressed by glossy photos and never, never reads the text.

I do find you are consumed with avant-gardism and that you tend to throw orchids to yourself (which isn't bad if your name is Norman Mailer). In any event keep up your fine work -- it is being appreciated.

JOHNNY GOTTLIEB
Boston, Mass.

Editors' Note: LSR is greatly surprised (and secretly impressed) that it is considered "avant-garde" in some quarters. Does this mean we have made the grade as literary and critical beatniks? We always thought of ourselves as arch conservatives! Mr. Gottlieb is respectfully invited to elaborate on his theory -- we are intrigued by it. And who's Norman Mailer?

NEWS FROM THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS ...

Dear Jon and Paul: This letter is a long time coming and I am still not clear on what I'd like to tell you. First of all, I deeply appreciate your efforts in pursuing that in which you so believe, and I

have been constantly amazed the way your magazine continues to appear regularly and maintains its sharp edge. It is good that you have received so much favorable and encouraging comment; for that kind of reaction is important to one dealing in an area so confused, cautious, and commercial that pure thought gets buried under secondary considerations. This is the kind of encouragement you have lent to my efforts and to all the New Lost, and we appreciate it. It is strangely nice that we don't know each other personally, for this way I know there is nothing personal meant in your criticism except for that which you personally believe in yourself.

I never subscribed to your Review. Instead I've also shared the profits with Izzy Young by purchasing my copy at his store. But now it's reached the point where Izzy makes a 10 cent phone call to tell me that another issue of the Little Sandy has arrived. I always get a big kick out of seeing your magazine on the desk at Harold Leventhal's office. I was the first to bring Little Sandy to his attention, and though he feels you are prejudiced about us, he also agrees with much of your criticism. Of course he was aroused by your comments on the Weavers (he is their manager) and I enjoyed that scene very much.

There is so much money being made off folk music and so little being put back into it. We are working out projects now to bring country musicians like Libba Cotten and Roscoe Halcomb (from Kentucky) to the city for concerts and more recordings for Folkways. We are also setting time aside for more collecting field trips and we shall also have to find the money to do this. Actually, the Ramblers concerts may help pay the way. We are now looking for concert work, and this is somewhat difficult for we are our own manager, and don't want to get very involved with the commercial guys who don't understand the way people feel about our music.

..Sometimes I feel that a magazine such as yours cannot go on, for you seem to burn so brightly like a new star, and I fear or sense that eventually you shall exhaust yourselves. Sometimes it is possible to renew your strength by taking on such exchanges as you had with Maynard Solomon, yet often such battles make enemies out of potential allies....Enclosed is money for a subscription. Thanks again for all your encouragement. Sincerely,

JOHN COHEN

New York, N. Y.

A MAN WHO'S IN SPEAKS OUT ...

Dear Paul and Jon: I always knew I was IN but I am grateful to LSR for bringing it

OUT. In the photograph on page 24 of ROGUE John Jacob Niles is IN. On page 25 he is OUT.

Couples:

Rev. Gary and Bette Davis
Josh and Pearl White
Dock and Susan Reed
Vaughn, Marilyn, and Bill Monroe
Bess and Hampton Hawes
Thomas and Blind Lemon Jefferson
Louis and Hermes Nye
C. F., Dean and Tony Martin
Robin and Robin Roberts

I am looking forward to your review of Burl Ives' second United Artists LP, BURL IVES SINGS IRVING BERLIN. I am not so much interested in whether he sings them in the ethnic manner or makes art songs out of them as I am in whether he composed them. Speaking of Mr. Berlin, in HOW TO PLAY THE FIVE-STRING BANJO, Mike's brother tells of Irving's specially built piano which has a lever that changes the key. It is, of course, a Scruggs piano. Yours truly,

JAY, BESSIE, and KATE
SMITH
Jacksonville, Fla.

SENSIBLE AND CYNTHIA ...

Dear Sirs: I enclose \$3.00 because I need no longer wait with head bowed to see what type family activity you might compare my concert to. By which I mean

that your line about the chain gang (being considered as a good day camp if one goes by Bibb and Belafonte) was one of the best tragi-comic lines I've ever read and I'm glad I'm too old for day camp. Your magazine with its passion and vitriol and opinionated, biased enthusiasm is just what is needed amid all the stodgy uncaring, noncommittal columns of "folk criticism." I, too, love this music although that love is tested daily by the excesses of other-directedness that are issued as folk LP's.

But the reason for this letter, besides reducing your needs to only 333,332 subscribers was to suggest that Mr. Solomon may have written as he did because he, being well-trained and versed in classical music (and Vanguard puts out some of the most serious and best classical LP's) (We agree! Eds.) may find it hard to take seriously an occupation that does not appear to be taken seriously by most of its practitioners. Classical singers read music, think about music, listen, study, apply standards. They judge their work and that of other singers not by the applause and laughs elicited but by the fidelity with which the music has been performed, by whether the composer's (read tradition's) intent has been understood and communicated. (I do not mean that

classical music attitudes can generally be applied to folk music.)

This attitude may seem irrelevant, even pretentious to those in folk circles who eschew criteria, but part of our messy problem may be occasioned by our very refusal to come to grips with the responsibility to his art that a professional folksinger ought to have. The standards by which one judges traditional singing differ entirely from those by which one judges classical performance but there must be unique standards set which will preserve the nature of traditional music without leading us into slavish imitation of the outer semblance of traditional style or into the multitudinous other faults LITTLE SANDY so carefully and mercilessly catalogues. Yours,

CYNTHIA GOODING
New York, N. Y.

TWO-FISTED ENTHUSIASM FOR LSR ...

Jon & Paul: First of all, I think your little magazine is something that has been a long time in coming (not that you could help that) and now that it's here, it's a great thing. A review of folk records is something that I have wished for for quite some time.

There are, of course, pros and cons to LSR. From these two issues (5 & 6) I can see that most of the time I like what you say and how you say it. My only doubt so far is in your reply to M. Solomon. Don't get me wrong, however, it's only a doubt, not a conviction. But Vanguard every now and then DOES come out with something worthwhile. I've heard that there is a pretty good Joan Baez record just out (I await your opinion on this anxiously) on V., although they have admittedly screwed up Odetta a few times and the like.

I do think it's great, whether it be right or wrong, that you have the guts to say it anyway. This, I think, is the best part of LSR -- nobody's scared of anybody. Talk away, by God, and if any stupid, fence-sitting %#\$%*& decides to try to put you away somewhere, I'm sure there are plenty of people like myself who will get you out again. Awaiting #7,

S. A. SCHERBATSKOY
Putney, Vermont

Editors' Note: Mr. Scherbatskoy has by now read the review, in LSR #8, of the much-discussed and long-awaited Baez album. But we will reiterate it here, for the benefit of both those who missed it and those who have told us the review was too vague: Baez is an exciting singer, and would be stirring whether she did LITTLE MOSES or NIGHT AND DAY. In fact,

it probably wouldn't matter which, since she is a superficial performer who doesn't probe the inner content of her material. She is not a folksinger, since she neither sings nor plays in traditional style -- nor does she perform traditional versions of folksongs. It's too bad she doesn't, for we feel she has the talent and sensitivity to become a good folk performer. We DON'T think every singer of folk songs should restrict himself to an imitation of "the outer semblance of traditional style", as Miss Gooding put it. But we DO think a performer, no matter how talented or how good a pure musician, must learn traditional style as a starting point. And how can one do this without study and subsequent imitation? Otherwise, the condition comes about which we recognize in Miss Baez -- a gifted youngster who has heard a couple of Odetta albums and has had a guitar lesson or two jumping on folksongs, changing and arranging and tampering to get them to fit her personal "style." The results are interesting and even moving, if the singer is sensitive enough. But as folk music, it is at best a tweety-tweet watering down; at worst a complete and tasteless travesty. And of no value to those of us who get our enjoyment from hearing the old songs brought alive. They just can't be brought to life without the proper treatment. They remain fakes, like a puppy parading around in an over-large bearskin.

(continued from page 20)

HAMBONE is the best of these songs: it features singing and a slapped syncopated answer beat out on the body. Sandwiched in next are two banjo instrumentals by Hobart Smith: a virtuoso performance of THE ARKANSAS TRAVELLER which must surely be definitive, and BANGING BREAKDOWN (Hobart calls it "The Old Negro Tune"), which, Lomax guesses, is "a survival of early Negro plantation music" and "a hint of a rich folk repertory that vanished...many years ago when the Negro grew tired of the banjo." Then comes Estil and Orna Ball's rendition of PAPER OF PINS (which is everything good folk music ought to be), and it is followed by the great Texas Gladden, singing unaccompanied THE LITTLE DAPPLED COW, a charming song which she herself wrote. Age may have dimmed Mrs. Gladden's vocal powers slightly, but she is still as great a mountain singer as you are ever likely to hear and THE LITTLE DAPPLED COW is one of the finest things in this set. Bessie Jones concludes the album with a beautifully moving children's lullaby reminiscent of ALL THE PRETTY LITTLE HORSES called GO TO SLEEP LITTLE BABY. Thus ends what is certainly one of the finest LP's in the entire series: a true landmark in recorded folk history.

CURRENT AND CHOICE will resume next issue. Look for Jack Elliott on the cover.

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THE
LITTLE SANDY
REVIEW

POETRY ROOM

⁴
The 200.5 (11-20)

On our cover this month is an engaging new group called The 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue Ramblers. The Ramblers, who are bringing a fresh new sound to the Washington, D. C. area with their versions of WHITE HOUSE BLUES and FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT'S BACK AGAIN, have not yet been recorded, but they are close enough to the Library of Congress to afford the hope that perhaps something can be worked out there. Let us hope they have a long life in folk music -- the Library's the perfect place for them to start.

EDITORS' COLUMN

EDITORS' COLUMN

EDITORS' COLUMN

By Paul Nelson & Jon Pankake

In case any of you are wondering, Jack Elliott will definitely be on the cover of LSR #12 -- our big First Anniversary Issue ... We take pleasure in announcing a new folk music magazine, FOLKWAYS, "a magazine of international folklore" put out by the University of Michigan Folklore Society. Subscriptions are \$1.00 a year (3 issues) and should be mailed to U of M Folklore Society, Student Activities Building, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Format is a la SING OUT! with songs and articles. The magazine is now in its third issue ... Robert Mitchum sings THE WILD COLONIAL BOY in THE SUNDOWNERS ...

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* * THE YEAR'S BEST * *

The year 1960 was, among other things, the Year of the Folk Boom. Folk LP's and singles sold across record counters like hotcakes; the Kingston Trio was on everybody's Top Ten list; guitar and banjo sales soared; coffee houses sprang up like weeds in college areas; everyone had Odetta's new LP; and Jean Ritchie and John Lee Hooker even got on television. Strange things were happening. For the first time in history, American folk music became Big Business: it was found that you could make a buck by knowing such old chestnuts as SKIP TO MY LOU or DOWN IN THE VALLEY. (You could, in fact, make even more by writing them.) Madison Avenue and Tin Pan Alley, taking stock of the situation, set about rewriting our American heritage 1960 style. Most of our songs were debased beyond recognition, and folk (in most cases, folkum) albums flew off the presses so fast you literally needed an IBM machine to count them. (Our estimate: there were at least 300 different folk albums released in 1960.) Any three people walking down the street became a folk group, and, chances were, had an LP out within a week. The Weavers, Harry Belafonte, and Odetta were in and out of Carnegie Hall so often it made your head spin. Mitch Miller (substitute any record company president) frantically grabbed four college kids, bought them two guitars and a banjo (in

this case, a TENOR banjo!), dressed them in Bermudas, and sent them off to Newport (where, of all things, they were accepted). Teenagers swooned over Dave Guard and Bob Shane and called Nick Reynolds "cute." Harry Belafonte recorded his entire repertoire five times and put it all out on double-LP sets. Leon Bibb did some remarkable social work in Negro prisons. Oscar Brand covered each branch of the Services at least three times. And at least one over-imaginative folknik in every town called Joan Baez the Virgin Mary.

But things were not all that bad. Folkways, Tradition, Prestige, Riverside, Stinson, Atlantic, Topic, Melodisc, 77, Collector, Nixa, and HMV continued their fine work in genuine folk song on both sides of the Atlantic. Harry Oster's new company (Folk-Lyric) showed every sign of becoming a major folk label of great importance. (Since all of Oster's records were released in late 1959, none of them were considered for Current and Choice, although one of them, Robert Pete Williams, did sneak onto our Top Ten of the Year). We at LSR reviewed some 150 folk albums this year, as well as listing several score more; and while the majority of them were out and out junk, it could be said with no small degree of truth that there were also several gems. The very best of these we would like to list here -- our TOP TEN FOLK

ALBUMS OF THE YEAR!

SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES (Atlantic 1346, 1347, 1348, 1349, 1350, 1351, 1352)

A seven-volume survey edited by A. Lomax.

CHILD BALLADS TRADITIONAL IN THE UNITED STATES (Library of Congress AAFSL 57, 58)

A two-LP set edited by Bertrand Bronson.

THE UNFORTUNATE RAKE (Folkways 3805)

JEAN RITCHIE FIELD TRIP (Collector Limited Edition 1201)

MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY (Folkways 2317)

THE COUNTRY BLUES (RBF 1)

THE RURAL BLUES (RBF 202) A 2-LP set.

THOSE PRISON BLUES (Folk-Lyric 109)

BEEN HERE AND GONE (Folkways 2659)

REV. GARY DAVIS: HARLEM STREET SINGER (Prestige-Bluesville 1016)

The "Top Ten" are in no particular order, and cover LP's released only in the U.S. on American labels. (See Current and Choice in England later in the article). However, we do feel that there was one release this year that is head-and-shoulders over everything else in the field, and that has to be Alan Lomax's monumental SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES on Atlantic. For here on 7 albums Lomax gave us unparalleled new glimpses in magnificent hi-fi and stereo of several of the Library of Congress's best informants (Wade Ward, E. C. Ball, Texas Gladden, Vera Hall, Hobart Smith) plus several superb "new finds" in American folk music. For those who love traditional

music (and its growth), there was little that could match it. Lomax and Atlantic Records presented us with a treasure that will last and improve over the years: perhaps our last glance at the "golden age" of traditional performing. Let us all be thankful to Lomax for such a complete and superlative survey.

Of the remaining 9 on the Ten Best list: Sam Charters edited and collated both the RURAL BLUES and the COUNTRY BLUES discs, using old 78rpm blues classics to illustrate his study of the vocal and instrumental resources of the country blues style (the albums also served as an excellent aural counterpoint to his book, THE COUNTRY BLUES); the Library of Congress, through another generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation, issued a 2-LP set of Child Ballads as sung in America by such outstanding singers as Texas Gladden, Mrs. Crockett Ward, Aunt Molly Jackson, Jean Ritchie, Emma Dusenberry; John Cohen, in a field trip to Kentucky, produced a fiery LP of Southern Mountain music and unearthed a fine mountain singer in Roscoe Holcombe; Ken Goldstein traced a rake's progress in a brilliant 55-minute study of the evolution of a ballad and used fine singers to prove his points; Harry Oster added another landmark to recorded Negro music with his discovery of Robert Pate Williams in Louisiana; Fred Ramsey

completed his 10-volume set of MUSIC FROM THE SOUTH with BEEN HERE AND GONE and used it to illustrate his book of the same name; Jean Ritchie compared British songs and singing she has collected in the field to her own performing of the American variants; and, lastly, Ken Goldstein gave us a brilliant hi-fi glimpse of the legendary Rev. Gary Davis. We hope it will not be our last look.

(The "Top Ten" are made up, with one exception, entirely of records reviewed in LSRs #1 through #10. Nothing in #11 was considered for this year's list except the Davis album. All other records in #11 have a chance to make next year's list, but came in too late to be considered for this year's.)

The following records represent our Current and Choice of the year. Records which appeared in the "Top Ten" list are not repeated here.

- JEAN RITCHIE, OSCAR BRAND, DAVE SEAR AT TOWN HALL (Folkways 2428)
PETE SEEGER: FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (Folkways 7532)
THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: SONGS FROM THE DEPRESSION (Folkways 5264)
MALVINA REYNOLDS: ANOTHER COUNTY HEARD FROM (Folkways 2524)
HOOTENANNY AT CARNEGIE HALL (Folkways 2512)
FURRY LEWIS (Folkways 3823)
LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN BLUES (Tradition 1040)

PETE SEEGER: THE RAINBOW QUEST (Folkways 2454)

JEAN THOMAS, THE TRAIPTIN' WOMAN: AMERICAN FOLK SONG FESTIVAL (Folkways 2358)

THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN: COUNTRY SONGS OLD AND NEW (Folkways 2409)

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: Vol. II (Folkways 2397)

LEADBELLY: NEGRO FOLK SONGS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (Folkways 7533)

WOODY GUTHRIE: BALLADS OF SACCO AND VANZETTI (Folkways 5485)

BILL McADOO SINGS (Folkways 2448)

EWAN MacCOLL & PEGGY SEEGER: THE NEW BRITON GAZETTE (Folkways 8732)

SONGS OF MEMPHIS SLIM & WILLIE DIXON (Folkways 2385)

JOHN LEE HOOKER: THE FOLK BLUES OF JOHN LEE HOOKER (Riverside 12-838)

JOHN LEE HOOKER: THAT'S MY STORY (Riverside 12-321)

AS I ROVED OUT (Field Trip -- Ireland) Coll. by Jean Ritchie (Folkways 8872)

GUY CARAWAN: THE NASHVILLE SIT-IN STORY (Folkways 5590)

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS, BROWNIE & SONNY, BIG JOE WILLIAMS: DOWN SOUTH SUMMIT MEETING (World-Pacific 1296)

Obviously, unless one has an uncanny eye for such classification, much gets left off such a list. There were many other fine albums in 1960 that would fall just below our Current and Choice level, but space does not permit us to

list them all. Not much hair-splitting is required, however, in picking these next ten albums as LSRs "TEN LOUSIEST RECORDS OF 1960."

BELAFONTE RETURNS TO CARNEGIE HALL (RCA-Victor)

BOB GIBSON: SKI SONGS (Elektra)

THE LIMELITERS (Elektra)

CASEY ANDERSON: GOIN' PLACES (Elektra)

LEON BIBB: TOL' MY CAPTAIN (Vanguard)

HARRY BELAFONTE: SWING DAT HAMMER (RCA-Victor)

FOLKSINGERS 'ROUND HARVARD SQUARE (Veritas)

BUD & TRAVIS: IN CONCERT (Liberty)

COFFEE HOUSE (Dorian)

ODETTA: BALLAD FOR AMERICANS (Vanguard)

Over in England, these are the albums (that we know of) to get. All may be obtained at meager cost by writing to Ken Lindsay, Agate & Co. Ltd., 10 Rathbone Place, Oxford Street, London W. 1, England:

ALAN LOMAX SINGS GREAT AMERICAN BALLADS (HMV 1192)

ALAN LOMAX SINGS (Nixa EP 1055)

PEGGY SEEGER & GUY CARAWAN: AMERICA AT PLAY (HMV 1174)

PEGGY SEEGER, GUY CARAWAN, ISLA CAMERON: ORIGINS OF SKIFFLE (Nixa EP 1043)

PEGGY, PENNY, & BARBARA SEEGER: SHINE LIKE A STAR (Topic EP TOP 38)

PEGGY, PENNY, & BARBARA SEEGER: COME
ALONG JOHN (Topic EP TOP 18)
PEGGY SEEGER (Topic 10T9)
JACK ELLIOTT: JACK TAKES THE FLOOR
(Topic 10T15)
JACK ELLIOTT & DERROLL ADAMS: THE RAM-
BLING BOYS (Topic 10T14)
JACK ELLIOTT: WOODY GUTHRIE'S BLUES
(Topic T5)
SHIRLEY ELIZABETH COLLINS: SWEET ENGLAND
(Argo 150)
SHIRLEY ELIZABETH COLLINS: THE FOGGY DEW
(Collector jeb 3) An EP.
SHIRLEY ELIZABETH COLLINS: ENGLISH SONGS
(Collector jeb 5) An EP.
COUSIN EMMY: KENTUCKY MOUNTAIN BALLADS
(Brunswick oe 9258, 9259) Two EP's.

There are undoubtedly many more albums in England that would be of much interest to the American folk song record-buyer, but many of them are old numbers which were released prior to this last year. We suggest you write to Ken Lindsay for the free list of records of folk music available in England -- and ask him to include a Topic and a Collector catalog.

Meanwhile, onward into 1961, a year that promises to be every bit the rival of 1960 in both folkum and folk music. Let us hope the latter prevails.

THE EDITORS

* * *RECORD REVIEWS* * *

BLIND GARY DAVIS -- HARLEM STREET SINGER
(Prestige-Bluesville 1015)

Prestige has satisfied a crying need by making available once again, on a marvelous new disc, the music of one of America's really outstanding folk artists. Although the Rev. Davis is a religious singer, his career has closely paralleled that of blues man Lightnin' Hopkins; in that both have become legends through their recordings, but have continued to devote themselves to singing for "their people" in small, local areas -- unknown to the thousands who marvel at their recordings. Davis' territory is the streets and store-front missions of New York City's Harlem, where he has provided free music for twenty years while, just a couple of miles down the Island, his old records were sold for fabulous prices to collectors unaware of his existence. Like Hopkins, Davis has been "re-discovered" in the last few years; and hailed all over the world as the last survivor of a great tradition.

Because of the stabilizing force of religious tradition, Davis' work probably has a more secure future among Negroes than has Hopkins'. It has not, however, been as well documented on record as has the blues. We have thousands of discs of Negro church music, but only a very few of the street singers. Davis represents what I suspect

is a sort of "mainstream" style of religious street singing. His songs show few of the influences of the newest spirituals heard on Negro radio stations, and he is not deeply indebted to Blind Willie Johnson (as is the Rev. Pearly Brown, featured on the Folk-Lyric disc which is the only other recent example of religious street singing). His singing is very strong, very simple, and very devout. None of the exhibitionism which is evident on many new spiritual records is present here -- though Rev. Davis by no means lacks enthusiasm. Even more remarkable for folk collectors is Davis' guitar playing. It is not at all like Johnson's: rather, it is a two-finger picking technique derived directly from the old country blues -- but solidly in the mood and manner of the spiritual. It is as brilliant, complex, varied, subtle, and moving as that of practically any three-finger blues picker. Rev. Davis is easily the outstanding instrumentalist today in the field of Negro religious recordings; and for facility and sheer delight his playing is excelled by no other folk guitarist in America.

Davis is in much better voice here than he was on AMERICAN STREET SONGS (Riverside 12-611); and the splendid new recording of voice and guitar is also much better. Notes and processing (except for the questionable taste and accuracy of calling Davis' music "holy blues") are a credit to all concerned. This is the

most important Bluesville release yet, and a must for all folk collectors. Let us fervently hope that it stays in the catalog longer than have Rev. Davis' other recordings. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

EWAN MacCOLL & ISLA CAMERON: STILL I LOVE HIM. Traditional love songs. (Topic 10T50)

What with the American pop and folk music market glutted with everything from WILD IS LOVE to LOVE IS A GENTLE THING and all degrees of passion in between -- full of sentiment as sticky, cheap, and tasteless as a box of dime-store bon-bons and betraying a questionable quasi-platonic, sexless philosophy -- it's no wonder that the "love songs" tag on an album has become anathema to most record buyers. This superb little British 10" LP should go a long way in restoring our faith in songs of the tender passion.

MacColl is in absolutely top form, and his renditions of the lament ARE YE SLEEPIN' MAGGIE? and the street song THE BLEACHER LASS OF KELVINHAUGH, dripping with honest, heartfelt Scottish fare-ye-well sentimentality, have a dignity and beauty unapproached by anything else on the disc. Miss Cameron doesn't have the stamp of authenticity that graces MacColl, and her attempts at dialect, especially, are singularly unconvincing. But she does have a woman's

way with a love song, and she is loaded with charm, to boot. So much so, in fact, that she steals away with quite the nicest song on the record -- the title song STILL I LOVE HIM.

Since MacColl and Miss Cameron unfortunately don't sing in duet here, and since each has a different accompanist (Peggy Seeger for MacColl; Ralph Rinzler for Miss Cameron), one gets the impression they were recorded at separate sessions. The resultant feeling of distance between the two singers is largely overcome by the unifying musical influence of the banjo and guitar accompaniments of Peggy and Rinzler -- so similar in style that it takes the expert ear to tell them apart.

Add to the disc's merits of charm and delicate (but definite) earthiness the fine booklet of notes by A. L. Lloyd -- and chalk STILL I LOVE HIM up on your list of records to buy as soon as possible.

FRANK SCHILDT: SONGS OF LOVE, PLAY, AND PROTEST (Folkways 8774)

American folksong fanciers may well want to pass this set up since only one out of the 23 songs included is sung in the English language. I have always been more than a little leery of the Internation-

al Balladeer, and Mr. Schildt here does little to change my mind. He glides easily and knowingly through several languages with the ease of a man changing his tie. It would seem that the problems of singing the folk songs of one's own land (in Mr. Schildt's case: the Netherlands) would be tough enough without complicating the process and taking on several more languages and cultures to which you cannot do justice. At best, I get the feeling that I am listening to a clever linguistic magician; and, at worst, complete travesty. The lone English number here is SAM HALL, done in a sort of Cockney British Music Hall style that is not without charm, but hardly worth buying the album for. I'm afraid Mr. Schildt will be of little interest to most American folk fans -- unless, of course, the Theo Bikel set takes him to be their very own.

THE BEST OF PEGGY SEEGER (Prestige 13005)

Considering Peggy's importance as a modern stylist (one of the 2 or 3 really valid ones) of traditional music, her recording career seems unjustly slight. She burst onto the commercial folk scene four years ago with four first class solo albums -- then moved to England and was little heard from (except as an accompanist) until this last year. This is her first solo album since 1957; and, while it is certainly not the "best" of Peggy, it is an important

documentation of her singing at what appears to be a critical period in her career. It is a well-recorded album, and contains the additional bonuses of a highly glamorous and flattering cover photo of Peggy; and an articulate set of self-written program notes.

Since about half the selections heard here have been previously recorded on various British and American labels, some interesting comparisons can be made. Peggy can be readily seen to be more ambitiously concerned with vocal decoration than was the previous case. RICH OLD MISER is much more colorfully sung here than on her Riverside disc; and the previously unrecorded CRUEL MOTHER, the finest cut on the record, contains considerably more decoration than was formerly characteristic of her singing. Some drastic changes in vocal pitch have been made in the re-recordings of WAGONER'S LAD and WATCH THE STARS (STARS, for example, originally recorded in the key of G, is now pitched down to C and sung accordingly much higher), which would seem to indicate either a change in Peggy's vocal register or an attempt to boost the delivery power of her small voice. Along with this vocal change, which has removed a good deal of the girlish softness from her singing, her banjo and guitar picking (usually the perfect models of precision) seem a bit on the messy side on this recording.

Peggy has told us in conversation that she is aware of the difficulties of retaining a grip on her American musical background while residing overseas for so long; and these difficulties must ultimately be singled out as the source of the dissatisfaction one feels with this record. Peggy seems headed for a no man's land halfway between British and American musical style -- and one need only listen to the noticeable Scottish-like nuance of I'LL NOT MARRY AT ALL on this disc for evidence. One can only hope that this girl, with her superb artistry and her sincere dedication to folk music, will eventually evolve a stylistic compromise satisfactory both to herself and to her many devotees on both sides of the Atlantic.

CASEY ANDERSON: GOIN' PLACES (Elektra 192)

In these days of blood-red gore and horror movies, I suppose it is only natural that Elektra Records should give to the world the first genuine folk monster. For Casey Anderson (listed in the liner notes as "a heart singer, a soul singer, he sings with laughter, tears, anger, despair, pain, ...blood..guts..hope..work..tragedy..hard luck..booze..good times..everything") here is easily the most revolting thing to hit the folk circuit in years: he is so full of

(for want of a better word) artificial excitement and commercial frenzy that each song sounds as if it were recorded in the midst of a nervous breakdown--orchestrated and chorused, of course. What can one say? Here we have the Big Jay McNeely of folk music, full of phony and superfluous emotion; a man who does practically everything but lay on his back and kick while he sings (and maybe he does that too -- I haven't seen him). Is he funny? At first he is, but after about a half-hour of him, you get the great urge to pick the record up, break it over your knee, and send it back to Jac Holzman. JOHN HENRY comes off as such a ridiculous experience the first time through that you can't help but laugh yourself silly -- Casey bangs his nylon-stringed Goya so hard it sounds like a hard-driving ukulele, and the whole song comes off like an Elvis Presley-Sammy Davis Jr. imitation, the rinky-dink Banjo Kings, poor Rhythm & Blues ("tomorrow gonna be yer buryin' day, yea yea") mishmash that finally winds up in a ridiculous banshee wail that will turn your stomach and bring tears to your eyes from laughing at the same time. But how funny is BLACK GAL -- sung with all the sensationalism and nuances of Confidential Magazine? How funny is GRIZZLY BEAR -- done with all the depth and nobility of

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FA2355 OLD-TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S Mountain songs, ballads, and instrumentals recorded in Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina by Euge Earle and Ralph Kinzler; various traditional performers including Clint Howard, Doc Watson, Tom Ashle, Eva Ashley Moore, Jack Johnson, sing and play Sally A., Old Ruben, East Tennessee Blues, Claude Allen, Richard Blues, Skillet Good and Greasy, The Old Man at the Mill, The Haunted Woods, Footprints in the Snow, I'm King Back to Jericho, Maggie Walker Blues, God's Gonna Eat My Troublin' Mind, Handsome Molly, The Louisiana Earthquake, Honey Babe Blues, True Lovers, Pretty Little Bk.

FA2301 CHILD BALLADS IN AMERICA, Volume One Sung by Jean Ritchie. Songs include The Unquiet Grave, Little Devils, Sweet William and Lady Margaret, They Lived an Old Lord, The Wife of Usher's Well, Cherry Tree Carol, Edward, Gently Fair Jenny, Lord Randall, Little Musgrave.

FA2302 CHILD BALLADS IN AMERICA, Volume Two Sung by Jean Ritchie. Songs include Gypsy Laddie, False Sir John, Hangman, Lord Bateman, The House Carpenter, Lord Thomas and Fair Ellender, The Merry Golden Tree, Lord Lovel, Old Bangum, Barbary Allen, Fair Annie of Lechroyan.

FC3509 THE CHILD BALLADS. Sung by Ewan MacColl.

FW6757 SCOTTISH POPULAR SONGS. Sung by Ewan MacColl.

FA2376 FIDDLER BEERS AND EVELYNE: WALKIE IN THE PARLOR.

FA2449 BILL McADOO SINGS, Volume Two.

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The Folk Song Magazine

Dick Tracy? How funny is FRANK SLIDE -- utilizing a horrible moaning chorus a la the archetypical orchestrated effort of all time: Glenn Yarbrough's MIGHTY DAY (Elektra 135). I, for one, am sick of this over-activated, pseudo-virile, leering brand of folkum: Lawrence Welk arrangements, soapy harmonicas, fifes, drums, choruses, orchestras, echo chambers, chain-gang "sounds", radio-announcer narrations, and all the vocal diarrhea in the world. Let us put a stop to all this frenetic masochism before traditional folk song becomes obsolete. It is high time to flush the toilet -- and Casey Anderson's GOIN' PLACES is a good place to start.

THE ART OF THE BAGPIPE: Played by Pipe Major John Burgess (Folk-Lyric FL 112)

This LP, true to its title, presents an excellent cross-section of the music for the Scottish bagpipe, played by the world's foremost piper. When I first heard John Burgess play in 1952, he was only 18 years old, but already he was recognized as one of the "first" pipers in Scotland. The record contains a good selection of marches, strathspeys; and reels, slow airs and jigs and one composition of the ceol mor (big music) or pibroch. This is the beautiful LAMENT FOR THE CHILDREN composed by Padruig Mor MacCrimmon in 1660.

In addition to the notes on the back of the record jacket, this album comes with a 12 page booklet containing extensive historical and musical background on bagpipe music. Undoubtedly, this album will be most appreciated by those who are players themselves, but this could also be said of any esoteric music, such as that of the 5-string banjo. However, there are many non-players who respond to bagpipe music and for anyone wishing to own an album of solo piping, this record is IT. For those interested in the full pipe band with drums, THE record is PRINCES STREET PARADE with the Edinburgh City Police Pipe Band (London LL1584). John Burgess was a member of this band at the time it was recorded. (Guest Reviewer: George Armstrong, Jr. of Wilmette, Illinois -- a fine piper in his own right, as he demonstrated at the recent U of Chicago Folk Music Festival.)

THE BEST OF JEAN RITCHIE (Prestige 13003)

Although every one of Jean's devotees would undoubtedly select a different list of her "best" numbers, chances are they will find about 80% of their picks included among the 20 tunes Jean herself decided upon for this album. Jean says: "I guess, when you come right down to it,

I have picked these few songs as my 'best' because being 'musts' on my program they have been shared by me with so many people. It is the accumulation of all this shared enjoyment, the warm memory of all these wonderful occasions, that has endeared these few songs to me especially, and has brought me in the last ten years that I have been singing for you to grow to love them just a shade more than the other hundreds of songs I know."

I can think of no one who knows and loves Jean's work who would not include PRETTY POLLY, SHADY GROVE, and FAIR AND TENDER LADIES among the very finest of her performances; and they, of course, lead the inclusions of the album. An additional treat for collectors of Ritchie songs are two previously unrecorded numbers -- SWEET JANE, which Jean has heretofore considered a "private" song; and THE DYING COWBOY, which, like JOE BOWERS and other such songs found in Kentucky, was brought back from the West by footloose Cumberlanders (one of whom was Jean's uncle Jason) and which doesn't sound a bit incongruous as sung by Jean. The only thing that will seem disappointing on the album is that someone at Prestige felt it was necessary to haul out the electronic "rain barrel" for Jean to sing MOONSHINERS into -- an wholly extraneous touch. But the album is on all other counts a charming portrait in sound of Jean, just now entering her prime as a folk artist. After buying your copy, why not pick up an extra as a gift for a

friend who may be under the delusion that ethnic folk music, authentically performed, is always rough-hewn and harsh; and never gentle, lovely, and graceful?

PRESTIGE-BLUESVILLE RELEASES: Reviewed by "Buddy Boy" Hawkins, noted Twin Cities jazz and blues critic, and author of the forthcoming book THE CONCEPT OF 'HIP' IN FOLK MUSIC.

These four latest albums, like most of the Prestige-Bluesville issues, present these blues artists as they perform today, with no attempt to recreate an earlier style. Modern instruments (including an electric organ on two albums) are used throughout. Three albums present oft-recorded veterans of the blues; the fourth a new face. Probably the best known of the veterans is Lonnie Johnson (BLUES AND BALLADS, Bluesville 1011), who was famous as a singer and jazz guitarist with L. Armstrong in the 20's, was rediscovered by King records in the 40's, and rediscovered again in 1960 by Prestige. He hasn't changed much, singing blues (W. C. Handy and Bessie Smith, not country blues) and ballads (Tin Pan Alley, not Child) in a style that is half crooner and half blues singer. His accompaniment on this album is good; featuring his own electric guitar, Elmer Snowden's plain guitar, and a bass. His singing does have a message. It's not country blues, but in a way it is a folksy kind of music,

and you may like him. If you do, you'll like this album. The other two of the veterans play the piano. One, Sunnyland Slim (SLIM'S SHOUT, Prestige-Bluesville 1016), a one-time associate of Muddy Waters and Blind Boy Fuller, turns out a very good album -- one of the best city blues discs I've heard. His singing and piano playing are clear, strong, and traditional. King Curtis, another R&B vet, plays some good R&B sax. There is also an organ, whose presence is justified by the fact that Negroes on the South Side are getting to like organs. You get used to it after a while -- though it will be hard for a traditional blues fan to take. It is first class R&B. The album of the other piano player, Montgomery (LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY: TASTY BLUES, Bluesville 1012), is a dud. The piano is bluesy but weak; the guitar is oversophisticated, and the vocals are tiresome. (Example: SATELLITE BLUES.) The instrumentals are good dinner music, but not much more. The new face is Shakey Jake (GOOD TIMES, Bluesville 1008), a singer and harmonica player. He does "down-home blues" which are listenable, but is no match for Forest City Joe (Atlantic 1352), to name one. The presence of an organ will make this set a minus for most LSR readers. Prestige's format, with complete personnel given for each date (a rarity in the R&B field) is admirable.

These albums are NOT blues of the Terry-Jefferson-McGhee-Hopkins-Hooker variety, but if you like Rhythm & Blues, there is much of value to be heard here.

THE BEST OF ED McCURDY (Prestige 13002)

No, folks, that cover photo of the character in long hair, beard, horn rimmed spectacles, and cigarette holder squinting through a haze of smoke is NOT a beatnik about to recite his poetry to a coffeehouse klatch -- it's really our old buddy, Ed McCurdy, in an outlandish disguise (?). Anyway, inside the album, friends of Ed's will find his tones just as pear shaped as ever, his approach still as delectably broad as the proverbial barn door, and his folk music polished -- if not exactly refined. Ed shouts out the tragi-comic tale of MRS. McGRATH in the style that we like, and pulls our leg with sly renditions of THE MILLER, JOLLY ROGER, THE MAIDENHEAD, WEE COOPER OF FIFE, and others. Ed has always been awfully candid about his inability to sing traditional American songs -- so there is no use here in criticizing the presentations of CHILLY WINDS, BLUES AIN'T NOTHING, and EVERY NIGHT WHEN THE SUN GOES IN other than to comment that, as McCurdy offers them, they come off as pretty moony items. Currently accompanying Ed (and sometimes annoyingly distract-

ing from and competing with him, as in JOHN HENRY) is Dick Weissman, whose strictly-from-Washington-Square banjo picking is as cute as a bug's ear -- and should appeal to all banjo fans who like bugs' ears. But all in all, considering that Ed is the one singer in America who can sing with his tongue in both cheeks at once, this album is highly representative -- and deserves attention from those who delight in McCurdy.

LETTER TO THE EDITORS ...

Dear Jon and Paul: We continue to enjoy LITTLE SANDY REVIEW. I was especially pleased to read your latest issue. This kind of tribute to Alan Lomax has been overdue for years. There has been so much petty criticism of him since his return from England to this country -- mostly personal-grudge things which have been presented in written form as major issues. The one thing that I keep re-learning about also is that his thinking does not function on this level. He thinks big, sees big -- sees his projects with the eye of a master weaver who understands at a glance the whole warp and woof of the world (of folk lore, and much more) and has all the traditional patterns at his fingertips. I have myself been murderously angry at this man dozens of times over things he has done (unwittingly, perhaps) to hurt people in his manipulation of these

patterns, but his finished tapestry has in every case commanded my respectful approval. He is a courageous man. A great man. May I congratulate you both for agreeing with me. Your sincere friend,

JEAN RITCHIE
Port Washington, N.Y.

* * * * *

(Continued from page 2)

John Edwards, the Australian collector and scholar of rare American country records, died in an auto accident on Christmas Eve. He was only 28 years old ... Wedding Bells Dept.: Guy Carawan will take the Big Leap in March. The lucky gal is from L. A. Congratulations! ... Barbara Dane will appear with Bob Newhart at the U of Minn. March 7 ... LSR, blushing like a bride, calls your attention to Nat Hentoff's quote in THE JAZZ REVIEW: "The very best -- or at the least, the freshest and most knowledgable -- folk music magazine now publishing in America is THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW...". Also D. K. Wilgus in THE KENTUCKY FOLKLORE RECORD: "THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW offers monthly some of the most interesting review and comments on the current folksong (and fakesong) recordings. Its modest format belies its worth." Shucks, men -- thanks! ... In a recent letter to LSR, Hally Wood says she is still singing and is learning to pick her brand new banjo. (Attention, Prestige: how about THE BEST OF HALLY WOOD?) Hally, like LSR, bemoans the

loss to unavailability of the legendary 78's made of the singing and playing of Texas Gladden and her brother, Hobart Smith. Hally wonders if Moses Asch still has the masters; and, if so, whether he will ever republish them. We suggest that the entire LSR reading public (all 25 of you) deluge Moe's mailbox with letters asking for a rerelease ... ATTENTION, BANJO PICKERS: Roger Baldwin, 511 15th Ave. SE, Mpls 14, will outfit your present banjo with a long neck (handcarved from a single piece of walnut, reinforced with a steel rod, and fitted with an ebony fingerboard) for only \$45. Roger also has a sweetheart of a banjo, an Orpheum rim (app. 30-35 yrs. old) to which he has fitted one of his own long necks, which he will sell for \$200. Your LSR editors are regular customers of Roger's; and wholeheartedly recommend his fine craftsmanship ... Available from LSR: THE LITTLE BLACK SONGBOOK (only a few left) @ 50¢; and back issues of LSR from #5 onward. Sorry, those issues #1-#4 are now collectors' items; and circulate only on the Black Market at fantastic prices.... Dime store record hunters should be on the lookout for a 49¢ Royale LP called THE LONESOME BLUES SINGER. We have seen it from time to time and understand it is now available again. The "lonesome" singer is none other than LEADBELLY, and, believe it or not, the LP is among the best recordings

ever made of the greatest of 'em all ... Frank Hamilton's AudioPhile LP (AP-73) will be ready in late March ... The March issue of SWANK magazine features an article titled FOLK MUSIC -- OR FAKE MUSIC? by one T. E. Rafferty. He gets off on the right foot by deploring the fact that singers like Jean Ritchie go unheard while others profit by debasing her songs; but he soon begins to babble about who is and isn't a "folknik" -- Pete Seeger is the archetypical folknik, he says, but then so is Oscar Brand. He concludes by calling Elektra a good company, the Ramblers "folkniks," etc. Rafferty sounds as though he may know better ... DISC COLLECTOR is doing a Tribute to Woody similar to LSR's ... A Lightnin' Hopkins single hit the top 40 in Mpls ... The new Vega catalog features an Earl Scruggs Deluxe Banjo, complete with Scruggs tuners and entirely gold-plated. Priced to sell, it's a steal at \$880 with case ... Next issue of LSR marks an entire year of service to folk song fans (and disservice to most record companies). Featured will be reviews of Vanguard's Newport '60 set, 2 Library of Congress discs, the Tarrriers' newest, a 2 volume set of American Child ballad variants by Jean Ritchie, and much more. Please subscribe. Advertisers keep laughing at us when we tell them our circulation. Until then: Good night, Uncle Dave, wherever you are.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER

Paul Robeson: ROBESON (Verve 64044)
The Brothers Four: B.M.O.C.
(Columbia 1578) Folk Muzak of the weakest order. Includes a folknik MY LITTLE JOHN HENRY.

Brendan Behan: SINGS IRISH FOLK SONGS AND BALLADS (Spoken Arts 760)

Oscar Brown, Jr.: SIN AND SOUL
(Columbia 1577) Poo-poo folk-jazz-poetry mixture that gets pretty lumpy.

Brand, Bikel, Gill, Holt: NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL (Elektra 189) Anthology of some of the worst at Newport, 1960.

Tom Glazer has a new LP on Kapp.

The Gateway Singers: DOWN IN THE VALLEY (M-G-M 3905) Initial offering on a new label -- their third in a year.

The Raunch Hands: AGAINST THE WORLD (Epic) More fun than most folkum.

Little Brother Montgomery: LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY (Folkways 3527)

Memphis Slim: BLUES (Folkways 3536)

Jump Jackson: BLUES (Folkways 3824)

Bill McAdoo: BILL McADOO SINGS, Volume 2. (Folkways 2449) Second LP by a highly promising singer.

Sonny Terry: SONNY TERRY ON JEW'S HARP (Folkways 2474)

THE GLORY OF NEGRO HISTORY (Folkways 7752)
Written by Langston Hughes and featuring, among others, Leon Bibb.

Lightnin' Slim: ROOSTER BLUES (Excelllo 8000)

Josh White: SPIRITUALS AND BLUES
(Elektra 193) BILLBOARD claims "Josh
thrusts aside stagey commercialism" here
and returns to a style "reminiscent of
Joshau White and the Carolinians."
We'll see.

Stan Wilson: LEISURE TIME (Verve 2140)
Champion Jack Dupree: CHAMPION JACK'S
NATURAL AND SOULFUL BLUES (Atlantic 8045)
Carolina Guitar Slim: BLUES FROM THE
COTTON FIELDS (Sharp 2002)

Big Joe Williams (not the Basie singer)
has an album out on Delmar, a Chicago
label., called PINEY WOODS BLUES (DL 602)

Jimmie Driftwood: SONGS OF BILLY YANK
AND JOHNNY REB (RCA-Victor 2316)

Mercury has signed the Smothers
Brothers, a folk duo which has been making
quite a stir on the Jack Paar show.

Flatt & Scruggs: FOGGY MOUNTAIN BANJO
(Columbia 1564) An all-instrumental set
featuring Earl's banjo.

Paul Evans: FOLK SONGS OF MANY LANDS
(Carlton 12-130) Teenage pop singer.

William Clauson: STORIES IN SONG
(Capitol 8539) The poor man's Dyer-Bennet.

The Kingston Trio: MAKE WAY (Capitol)
Contains FAIR AND TENDER LADIES and
HIELAND LADDIE.

Vanguard will release an album of
Woody's songs by Cisco Houston and an EP
of industrial songs by Ewan MacColl.

Otis Spann: OTIS SPANN IS THE BLUES
(Candid 8001) With Robert Lockwood, Jr.
Spann is Muddy Waters' pianist.

ENGLISH RECORDS

Dominic Behan and Ewan MacColl: STREETS
OF SONG (Topic 12T41) Folkways' SINGING
STREETS.

Ewan MacColl: CHORUS FROM THE GALLOWS
(Topic 12T16)

Dominic Behan: EASTER WEEK AND AFTER
(Topic 12T44) Songs of "The Troubles."

Dominic Behan: DOWN BY THE LIFFEYSIDE
(Topic 12T35) Irish street ballads.

A. L. Lloyd: OUTBACK BALLADS
(Topic 12T51) Bush songs.

Perry Friedman: VIVE LA CANADIENNE!
(Topic TOP 56) EP of Canadian songs.

Sandy and Caroline Paton: HUSH LITTLE
BABY (Topic TOP 57) EP.

Big Joe Williams: POOR JOE WILLIAMS
(Collector jen 3) Still not the Basie
singer.

Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee: BLUES IS
MY COMPANION (Columbia 33 SX 1223)
IN LONDON (Pye nje 1074) An EP.

Memphis Slim: MEMPHIS SLIM U.S.A.
(Collector jgn 1004)

FRENCH RECORDS

T-Bone Walker: T-BONE WALKER, Vol. 1
(Polydor 27721) Older recordings.

RALPH WILLIS WITH SONNY TERRY (Odeon
3504) Fine unknown country blues singer.

LSR's monthly listings are as complete as
we know how to make them. If you know of
folk records (new releases) that we have
missed, please let us know.

Culled from SING OUT! and Izzy Young: Prestige is doing an album of Jimmie Rodgers songs sung by Obray Ramsey; THE CAT CAME BACK and other funny songs, by John Greenway; an album of Civil War songs by Frank Warner; and THE BEST OF CYNTHIA GOODING.

Vivien Richman: FOLK SONGS FOR YOU AND ME (Bobtone)

Folkways will soon release Volume Three of The New Lost City Ramblers. Also, an LP, recorded by Mike Seeger, of the Lilly Brothers, Bluegrassers from Boston.

Overheard at the Chicago Folk Festival: RCA-Camden will release this summer an LP by the Carter Family (supposed number: Camden CAL-586) containing DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH, LULU WALL, GOD GAVE NOAH THE RAINBOW SIGN, FORSAKEN LOVE, LITTLE MOSES, GRAVE ON THE GREEN HILLSIDE, I'M THINKING TONIGHT OF BLUES EYES, ON THE ROCK WHERE MOSES STOOD, SWEET FERN, KITTY WALTZ, WABASH CANNONBALL, and WILDWOOD FLOWER. We don't know if it's true, but that's the rumor. All songs were recorded from 1927 to 1932 and are original issues.

RCA-Victor will release a fourth Jimmie Rodgers LP: JIMMIE THE KID.

Ed McCurdy will do some hymns and another kid's album for Folkways. For Tradition, he'll do an LP of Cowboy songs.

Why doesn't somebody record Jack Elliott now that he's back in the States?

Frank Hamilton's Audiophile LP will be out in 90 days.

Folkways will soon issue a double-LP of a Christmas Eve service in the Georgia Sea Islands, recorded and edited by Guy Carawan. Moe Asch will also issue two more LP's on the Sit-In Movement in the South.

Mel Lyman reports there are TWO new Obray Ramsey albums coming. One's on Prestige. The other --- ?

"RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT" (Col 33SX1291)

Jack Elliott has a new album on English Columbia. One side features Woody songs; the other, Jimmie Rodgers.

LSR #12 will feature an article by the editors on the First Annual Chicago Folk Festival -- and what a festival that was! We have read where the Colorado Folk Festival people have issued an LP of some of their artists. Wouldn't it be wonderful if someone in Chicago would put together an album or two from the material from the Chicago Festival. The Horton Barker material alone would be priceless. Radio WMFT has all the programs on tape in case any record company is interested.

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DISC & NEEDLE is THE place to go for your folk records in Minneapolis. Complete Folkways stock personally picked by the editors of LSR. Mail orders accepted.

## LAST MINUTE RECORD NEWS

Scratch one more from the LSR WHY DOESN'T SOMEBODY RECORD....? Dept.: Prestige will issue very shortly TWO new Jack Elliott LP's. One will be all Woody Guthrie songs. Now that's the best news in a long time.

The Samplers: IN PERSON (Kapp 1232)

Joe Glaser: SONGS OF WORK AND FREEDOM (Washington 460) Acc. by Mike Seeger.

Brock Peters has signed with Strand.

United Artists has a new folk group called The Highwaymen.

Jo Stafford will re-record her famous FOLKSONGS album (4 Capitol 78's) for Capitol in LP form -- and add six more songs in the process.

Verve will release shortly FIVE Big Bill Broonzy LP's in a deluxe \$25.00 set. Bill Randle did the recording.

Still more Carter Family news! Harmony (for \$1.98) HAS released an LP called THE FAMOUS CARTER FAMILY (Harmony 7280) containing, among others, MY CLINCH MT. HOME, WORRIED MAN BLUES, CAN THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN, KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE. Sides are dubbed from old 78's (Okeh?) recorded in 1935.

There will be a BEST OF GUY CARAWAN on Prestige in April.

Penny and Jean: TWO FOR THE ROAD (RCA-Victor 2244)

Oscar Brand and others have a SINGING HOLIDAYS CHILDREN'S ALMANAC record out on Young People's Records.

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES (Atlantic 1346-52) A 7-volume set.

Alan Lomax provides us with the year's best folk release -- 7 LP's of field recordings in the South.

THE UNFORTUNATE RAKE (Folkways 3805)  
Edited by Ken Goldstein.

A study in the evolution of a ballad. The finest documentary to come from Folkways since MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY.

SHIRLEY ELIZABETH COLLINS: ENGLISH SONGS (Collector jeb 5) An English EP.  
SHIRLEY ELIZABETH COLLINS: SWEET ENGLAND (Argo 150) An English LP.

One of Britain's finest singers in two important (and delightful) albums.

GUY CARAWAN: THE NASHVILLE SIT-IN STORY (Folkways 5590)

Meaningful protest in story and song.

CHILD BALLADS 'TRADITIONAL IN THE UNITED STATES (Library of Congress AAFS L 57, AAFS L 58) A 2-LP set.

Mrs. Texas Gladdan, Jean Ritchie, Aunt Molly Jackson, Emma Dusenbury, Pearl Jacobs Borusky, Mrs. Crockett Ward, others.

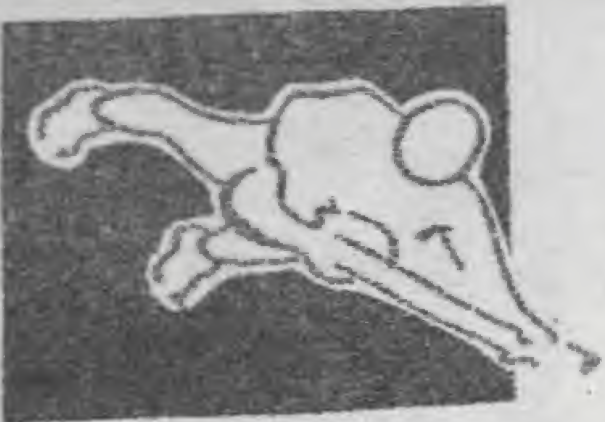
LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS, BRONNIE & SONNY, BIG JOE WILLIAMS: DOWN SOUTH SUMMIT MEETING (World-Pacific 1296)

Country blues passed around among four of the best. Hopkins is superb.

# LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

3220 Park Avenue South  
Minneapolis 7, Minnesota

*The* FOLK RECORD MONTHLY



For complete record reviews and listings each and every month of the year -- plus the best in "free-wheeling iconoclasm" and "rapier-like thrusts," subscribe to the now-famous LSR. \$3.00 yearly.

EDITED BY JON PANKAKE & PAUL NELSON

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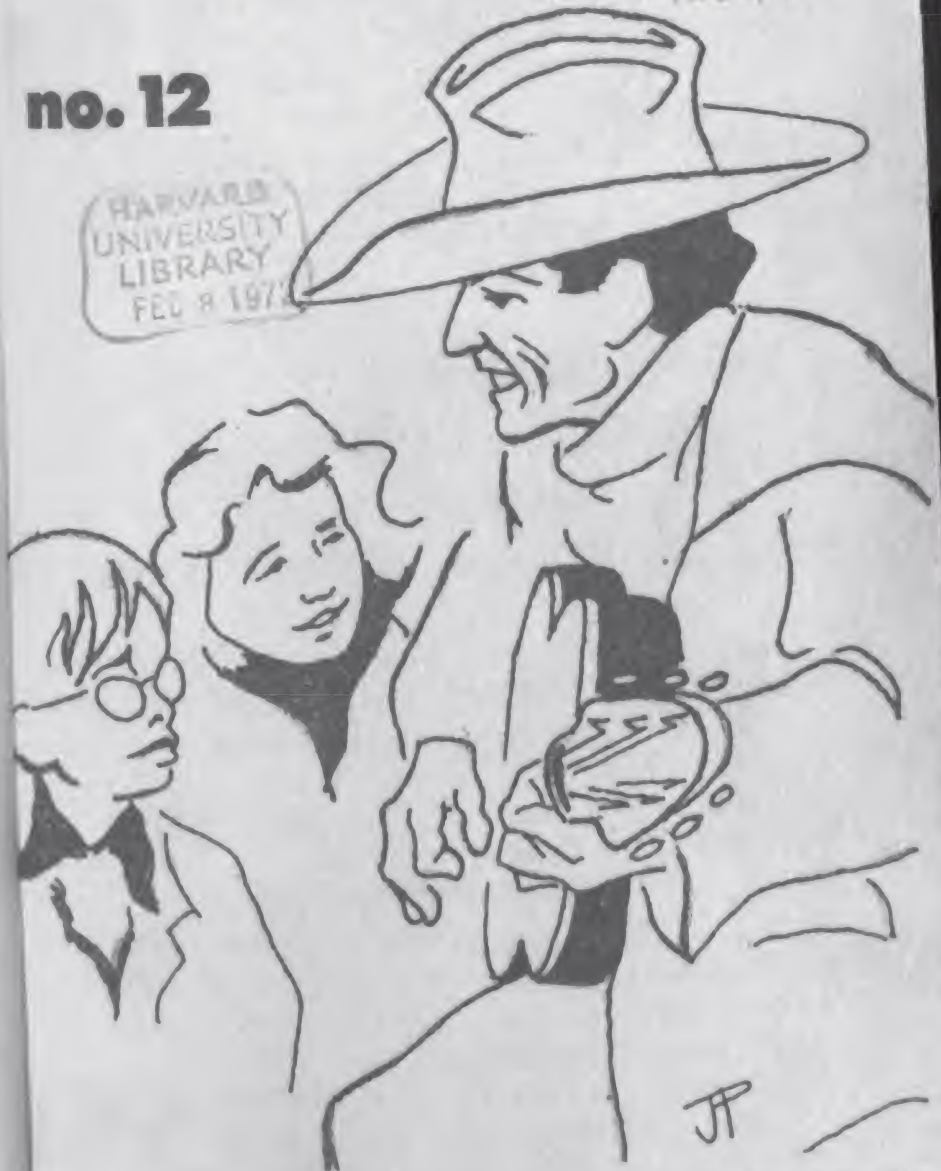
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# THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

30c

~~POETRY ROOM~~

On our cover this month is Jack Elliott, our best singer of Woody Guthrie songs. Jack can be heard in England on Topic, Collector, and English Columbia, and in this country on Elektra. Ken Goldstein will soon release two Jack Elliott albums on Prestige. Cover drawing is by Jon Pankake.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

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*By Jon Pankake & Paul Nelson*

Book to get: John Greenway's AMERICAN FOLKSONGS OF PROTEST has been reprinted by A. S. Barnes and Company as a Perpetua Book. It's now a paperback available for \$1.95. You don't find a bargain like that too often ... Tom Paley will be our cover subject for #13 ... LSR blues reviewer Dave Glover will practice what he preaches at the Padded Cell in late April. Dave, a fine harmonica player, and partner Noel Johnson sing up a storm on the blues. The boys recently copped first money at the Cell folk contest, and their reward will be a recording contract and a ten-day engagement at the Cell at professional rates. Wedgely Todd has indicated he may join them if his movie in Mexico is finished in time ... See you next month.

Editors' Note: The following report includes only the activities of the first two days of The University of Chicago Folk Festival (Friday and Saturday, Feb. 3 and 4). Other commitments made it impossible for us to stay for the meetings and concerts of the final day.

## THE FIRST ANNUAL UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO FOLK FESTIVAL

Ewan MacColl remarked after the most recent Newport Festival that he had seen every imaginable kind of singer there "except a folk singer." He was, of course, pointing out the basic weakness of 99% of the "folk" festivals -- most of them merely turn into a potpourri of city singers, college amateurs, pop music groups, and night club professionals; and there are no "folk" in sight. This has been the lamentable condition at Newport the last two years; and, by and large, it is true of almost all of the festivals in the country. Call it a folk festival, yes -- but get the Kingston Trio and The Brothers Four there so you don't lose money or puzzle your audience. Happily, this was NOT the case at Chicago. Headman Mike Fleischer, president of the University's Folklore Society, saw to it that the organization's FIRST ANNUAL FOLK MUSIC FESTIVAL was handled right. Traditional performers were given a chance to perform as well as the city singers. The University went to great expense to get some of the best of the ethnic

performers. Horton Barker, Library of Congress singer in 1939 and again in 1950, came up from his home in Virginia with storyteller Richard Chase; Frank Warner brought one of his best informants, Frank Proffitt (who gave Warner TOM DOOLEY) of North Carolina; Johnny Cohen and Roscoe Holcombe came up together from Hazard, Kentucky; fellow Rambler Mike Seeger brought with him Mrs. Elizabeth Cotten, master country rag-time guitar picker; and blind Negro street singer Arvella Gray came up from Texas. These people formed the hard core of authenticity which made the Chicago Festival ultimately more successful than almost any other folk festival presented to city audiences. Around them were some of the best of the city artists: The New Lost City Ramblers, Alan Mills and Jean Carignan, Fleming Brown, Sandy Paton, and Bob Atcher. Memphis Slim and Wee Willie Dixon represented the city blues, and The Stanley Brothers showed us city folks what a real good bluegrass band sounds like. There were only two real clinkers in the program, and they were both Chicago acts. Inman and Ira are two young Negro entertainers who do everything possible there is to do wrong singing chain gang songs, street cries, and the like. Win Stracke, a crowd favorite, wasted much valuable time the second night singing a few Burl Ives songs just like Burl used to sing them. Otherwise, Fleischer kept his program admirably free of such festival stalwarts as Odetta, Bud and Travis, and their ilk. Much

credit must go to him for that. It was largely because of him that the Festival was such a popular and critical success.

The reception on Friday afternoon, held in a comfortably upholstered building full of auditoriums and meeting rooms called Noyes Hall, got off to a slow start. The heavy snowfall (over a foot) of the night before held up many of the performers, but everyone arrived in time for Friday night's concert. There was literally folk music in the air in the buildings; as guitar-packing folkniks formed impromptu hoots in corners and lounges. Leading the relatively sheltered lives we do in Minneapolis, we poor country boys were startled by our first contact with big-city "folk cult" members. Shaggy persons were crawling out of the woodwork singing and playing THE SLOOP JOHN B, BANUA, LONESOME TRAVELLER, and other old-time favorites. Every guitar strumming girl seemed to be ecstatically belting out VIRGIN MARY in tones as close to Joan Baez's as she could muster. Off in a corner, some of the higher echelon pickers were dazzling wide-eyed boys and girls with their fantastic, vacant-eyed guitar picking -- composed of equal parts of blues and bluegrass, and played at a dizzying gait. No art or style, but plenty of razzle-dazzle. One was reminded of Lomax's statement on city kids who become so instrumentally proficient they "soon tire and grow sick of their own sound." Some of these kids could

technically have played rings around many of the actual performers; but whatever they were playing (we couldn't figure it out), it wasn't folk music. Libba Cotten took out her guitar and began warming up for the evening concert, and immediately a girl with long, stringy hair and black stockings was worshipping at her feet (literally). One could picture her a few years back doing much the same thing for Elvis. Mrs. Cotten played and sang I DON'T LOVE NOBODY in her intimate, gracious way; whereupon the girl shrieked, "That's on your album. We've heard it before. Why don't you do something NEW?" She finally snatched the guitar out of Libba's hands and began whining, "How do you do it? Show me how to do it, huh? Show me how to do it." The last we saw of the little pest, she was crawling up Izzy Young's sleeve.

Studs Terkel m.c.'ed the first two nites of the festival in such a florid and overly poetic manner that the whole thing began to sound like some symbolic, folknik morality play with all the folksingers playing variations of Everyman. This high-flown verbosity seemed to embarrass everyone in the auditorium except Studs, who kept right on playing Will Rogers both nights. His flamboyant dime-store prose bordered on the absurd, and he often got both feet in his mouth as a result of all those fancy and inappropriate adjectives running away with him. This is what happened when he

wound up saying that Elizabeth Cotten was a great folk artist because she worked as a servant. He also introduced the Ramblers as a "bluegrass" band. It was too bad that Studs felt he had to play the personality and lay on the verbiage for every act -- he meant well. After George Armstrong's bag-piping called the concert to order, the New Lost City Ramblers zipped onstage sawing away at FORKED DEER, and the program was off and running. They put on a whale of a show, with their "old-timey ballet" (as one person described their stage antics). Mike Seeger hunches over his fiddle and stamps his foot like a man putting out a grass fire. John Cohen occasionally jigs and hops up and down in time to his guitar bass runs; and Tom Paley puts on a show of his own with his frantic between-numbers tuning -- usually done standing nose-to-nose with Cohen while Mike chats with the audience. ("Yes, that's old T. P.," Mike says, "Tuning problem.") During one number, when Tom was in front of the mike rapping out a banjo break, Mike stood behind him solemnly turning an imaginary crank located in Paley's posterior. At the conclusion of their stint, Mike introduced Mrs. Cotten, who, with great dignity and charm, presented a selection of her songs and instrumentals. Bearing herself like a queen and modestly and softly tapping one foot, she demonstrated that she has everything in surplus that the folknik guitarists lack -- taste, artistry, purity. With her beautiful rags and blues still ringing in our ears, we were assailed by Inman and Ira,

who even have the nerve to come onstage DRESSED like Belafonte. "It's been a long time since we've done an ETHNIC show," they crowed. Their absurd posturings and silly close-harmony wailing were all the more embarrassing coming right after the great show put on by Mrs. Cotten -- and even more shamefully, the folknik element in the audience saw to it that they got the biggest hand of the evening. Blind Arvella Gray came onto the stage carrying a battered metal guitar and looking quite dubious. He began singing with great reserve, but is too much the entertainer to be stymied for long -- midway through JOHN HENRY he started throwing asides to the audience. They ate it up. Suddenly, his face burst into a big grin as he realized a big city audience is essentially the same as his familiar sidewalk audiences back home; and he really cut loose. He had a whee of a time with the rest of his numbers, and the audience wouldn't let him off the stage. When he finally left the stage to a resounding hand, his radiant smile told the world he was a proud and happy man. He was followed onstage by a large slice of Canadian ham named Alan Mills. Mills apparently thought he was running the marathon both nights he was on; and despite his announced haste ("Don't clap for me; I'm in a hurry."), he hogged double his allotted time and curtailed the performing time of everyone who followed him. Mills may be the man who brings the old vaudevillian hook out of retirement. Jean

Carignan's fiddling and clogging excited the best critic in the house -- for Horton Barker, seated directly behind us, thought Jean was terrific; and urged him on through every number with much hand-clapping, knee-slapping, and vocal enthusiasm. What higher tribute can you get? Horton was quite a show himself when Carignan was on. Frank Warner was another high spot of the evening. "I'm a reporter up here tonight," he says, "not a folksinger. This is the way I heard it from Yankee John Galusha -- you're hearing HIM sing it tonight." It is true that the style and text of his songs are those of his informants, but the electric spark that lights up the stage; that hushed the crowd for HOLD MY HAND LORD JESUS; is all Warner's own -- and all magic. Richard Chase wandered onstage from the audience and, sans spotlights, convulsed the crowd with the MAN IN THE KRAUT TUB story. Then he went back down into the audience and led Horton Barker onto the stage. A frail, white-haired man, Horton is blind; and stood erectly before the mike, his body slightly tensed like a drawn bow. He announced that he felt like the schoolboy asked to give an impromptu talk on George Washington. "George Washington is dead," said the boy; and after a lengthy pause, "and I don't feel so good myself." Which completely broke up the audience. When the laughter died down, Horton hummed a few notes ("I tune my voice, kinda like a guitar."), and



what followed was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for city folk fans. All of Horton's 72 years were in his singing of THE FARMER'S CURST WIFE, and it was a long look into the beauty of his person; ballad singing that could rival anything in the world for sheer magnificence. The house was stunned into silence -- only Horton's clean, high voice could be heard. Gradually, a few of us began to involuntarily sing along on the "fi-diddle-i" refrain -- which pleased Horton immensely. He encored with THE MILLER and was led from the stage. We had experienced the high point of the night, and chills raced up and down many a spine in the audience. Lovely Gerry Armstrong then sang a mountain ballad with her dulcimer, and was joined by husband George for a charming duet. Fleming Brown proved himself a knowledgeable picker and singer of mountain banjo tunes. The concert was concluded by The Stanley Brothers, who roared out onto the stage wearing uncertain, rubbery grins and yelling "Howdy, folks," and a number of sophisticates in the crowd laughed at them. They seemed to be feeling out the folksong crowd's response to their brand of commercial country music, and didn't open up until the next night's show.

Saturday was filled with panel discussions and demonstrations. Mike Seeger and Ralph Stanley led things off with a banjo workshop, while John Cohen conducted a

(continued page 48)

\* \* \* RECORD REVIEWS \* \* \*

THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL (Vanguard 9083, 9084) A 2-LP set.

Just about one year ago, in LSR #1, that battered and bedraggled, hand-assembled collector's item with Ed McCurdy and Billy Faier on the cover, we reviewed Vanguard's 3-LP set on the first Newport Folk Festival. We were a new magazine then and it was one of the big (or so we thought at the time) record releases of the year and we wanted to do a good job on it -- to say what we knew and not offend people. Unfortunately, we didn't know much (and some say we still don't) and, worse yet, we played it cautious and against our better beliefs praised things we had no business praising. (On the basis of the first three issues of LSR, it's a wonder any of you subscribed.) Now, one year later and with an appreciable gain in knowledge (we hope), we are once again confronted with a Vanguard Newport Folk Festival recording. It would be hard to rave about this one, but it would be equally as hard to say it is a bad set of albums. In almost every case, the good balances the bad; and about half of this set is very worthwhile indeed.

To me, the best things on these LP's are the singing and playing of The New Lost City Ramblers, Peggy Seeger, Ewan MacColl, Pete Seeger, Tom Makem, Jean Carignan, and, surprisingly, Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. MacColl, the absolute

master of the folk songs of the British Isles, contributes what is perhaps the albums' finest performance, LANG A-GROWING, sung accompanied. There can be little doubt as to this man's art, and it is a shame that this is the only song he gets to sing alone on both LP's. Two Seegers vie for second spot and, to my ears, Mike's MAN OF CONSTANT SORROW edges Peggy's WILLIE MOORE (nicely frailed and reminiscent of Burnett and Rutherford on the Folkways Anthology) by the smallest of margins. Mike (who calls himself "the poor man's Seeger"), our finest city singer of old-time music, is growing more and more in stature every day and, in recordings like this one and WHEN FIRST TO THIS COUNTRY is liable to make the autoharp as popular an instrument with city folksingers as his brother Pete did the banjo. Ewan and Peggy sing together on THE BALLAD OF SPRINGHILL and Peggy does a solo encore with HANDSOME MOLLY, while Mike joins the best folk group in the country (the NLCR, of course) in two free-wheeling new numbers, FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP and ROLL IN MY SWEET BABY'S ARMS. The Ramblers are in top form here, and the terrific "in concert" sound will delight all their fans! Jean Carignan, the Canadian cab driver-fiddler, plays a fantastic solo of LE REEL DU PENDU, complete with clogging. Tommy Makem plays the pipes a bit and then sings JOHNNY I HARDLY KNEW YE the way it should be sung (and seldom is) and follows up with THE

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- 1006 - The Return of Roosevelt Sykes
- 1007 - Blues by Lonnie Johnson
- 1008 - Good Times  
Shaky Jake



BLUES BY  
LONNIE JOHNSON

1007



BLUES & FOLK  
Brownie McGhee & Sonny Terry

1005

- 1011 - Blues and Ballads  
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WHISTLING GYPSY. The last (and surely not least) Seeger on the set does EAST VIRGINIA, IN THE EVENING, and HIELAND LADDIE (with Oscar Brand) in his usual fine form. Pete and Oscar are especially pleasing on LADDIE. Flatt and Scruggs enthusiasts may bemoan the fact that there is little or no banjo on the four numbers that the Foggy Mountain Boys do, but folk fans will take heart that the Flatt-Scruggs variety of Bluegrass music has never sounded so homemade and folky. There is little fantastic exhibitionism here and, as a result, such songs as JIMMY BROWN THE NEWSBOY, SALTY DOG, and CABIN ON THE HILL sound especially good. CABIN ON THE HILL is very similar in feeling to the outstanding E. C. Ball version on Atlantic. So much for the best.

Alan Mills and John Lee Hooker both do three songs that fall into the mediocre. Mills is superficially pleasant and Hooker strangely polite and reserved. John Lee's famed TUPOLO BLUES is quite a disappointment. Jimmy Driftwood and Ed McCurdy are their usual selves and both sing songs they've done before. Cisco Houston is just plain awful: he sounds like a refugee from TV playing a little kid's tiny wind-up guitar. Bob Gibson, hoarse and fuzzy-voiced, offers nothing we haven't heard before. Gibson, who last year introduced Joan Baez to folk audiences, this year presents his new singing partner, Bob Camp (who, on YOU

CAN TELL THE WORLD at least, seems to be trying his best to sound like a male Joan Baez). The results are hardly earthshaking.

It is a pity that Vanguard did not see fit to include this year's performances by Jesse Fuller, Butch Cage and Willie Thomas, Frank Warner, Fleming Brown, and the Clancy Brothers (all of whom were listed on the program). It is a blessing that Manny Solomon & Company did not include Odetta or the Weavers. Our crystal ball tells us, however, to expect in the very near future albums such as ODETTA AT NEWPORT, THE WEAVERS AT NEWPORT, JOAN BAEZ AT NEWPORT, etc. At any rate, this year's set of Newport albums is well worth buying. There are enough good people on it to warrant paying out the required \$10.00. But just barely.

SQUARE DANCES WITH CALLS (Folkways 8825)  
Volume One.

JIGS AND REELS (Folkways 8826)  
Volume One.

When Moses Asch of Folkways sets out to do something, he does it right. For in these two records, recorded by one of Canada's leading folklorists, Edith Fowke, the listener gets 1) complete instructions on how to square dance 2) the music and calls with which to square dance 3) complete instructions on how to call square dances 4) the music with which to call square

dances 5) an introduction to one of Canada's finest square dance callers, N. Roy Clifton. Folk dance groups should race right out and pick this set up -- for these two discs provide ample excuse for many a good night of dancing and jigging. Folk fans may find them equally hard to resist.

FOLK MUSIC FROM WISCONSIN (Library of Congress AAFSL 55)

With the emphasis placed on the folklore of the Southern United States, we of the North and the Midwest often are led to feel (like the old Puritans who exclaimed that the Devil seemed to have all the good songs) that the Appalachians have a monopoly on American folksong. This collection, edited by Helene Stratman-Thomas of the University of Wisconsin, certainly reinforces our confidence in the tradition of our own part of the country. It is an ambitious attempt to document portions of the four mainstreams of Wisconsin folksong tradition -- Canadian influence, ballads of the early Cornish settlers, songs transplanted by the Kentucky immigrants of 1890, and indigenous Wisconsin songs. The result is a loose and diversified program ranging from LORD LEVEL (an extremely jolly variant of this old-time tear-jerker) and AWAKE, ARISE YOU DROWSY SLEEPER to French-Canadian lumberjack dances played on the cigarbox fiddle and "Viking" cello (fashioned from a wooden box and a pitchfork) to the little-known and terrifying MILWAUKEE FIRE. Of most wide-

spread interest will be the singing of the "star" of the album, Mrs. Pearl Jacobs Borusky -- one of the sweetest singers and finest stylists in the Library's collection. Mrs. Borusky contributes the most charmingly and thoroughly Americanized version of SHULE AROON-BUTTERMILK HILL that I have yet heard ("I'll sell my hat, I'll sell my coat; To buy my wife a little flat boat... I'll sell my pants, I'll sell my vest; To get enough money to go out west...") and a ballad of undistinguished melody but wonderful text called ONCE I COURTED A CHARMING BEAUTY BRIGHT. Although no definite information is given, the notes intimate that Mrs. Borusky is a native of Wisconsin. If so, her distinct Kentucky singing style was learned from her Kentucky born mother amid an alien musical environment -- a phenomenon of great interest to the student of folksinging style. (Both Mrs. Borusky and her mother, Mrs. Ollie Jacobs, have recorded for the Library, if anyone wishes to investigate further.)

As a regional study, the album will appeal to us of the Upper Midwest most of all; for the songs and styles, of course, overlap into our own Minnesota and the entire Great Lakes region. Of special personal interest to the staff of LSR was the inclusion of POMPEY IS DEAD in a version nearly the same as that sung by our own Doris Nelson, who was born and raised in the farm country of the Red River Valley and who learned POMPEY, among other tunes, at the knee of her folksinging dad.

#### RICHARD DYER-BENNET (Dyer-Bennet 9)

It may seem a paradox to say in one breath that Richard Dyer-Bennet is undoubtedly the best and most tasteful of the art-song folksingers and then in the next that I can truthfully say, without malice, that I don't care if I ever hear him again. But these are indeed my feelings about the man. His manner of singing folk songs is to take all the very qualities that make a folk song meaningful and to eliminate them. This reverse process (it seems strange to me that Dyer-Bennet can believe one can sing a folk song better by going AWAY from the source rather than TOWARD it) often gives one the feeling of parading around in a museum of beautiful, lifeless, fancy dolls. The songs become mere superficial models that at best can only hint at the true beauty of the real object. This becomes glaringly apparent in Mr. Dyer-Bennet's treatment of the American BUFFALO SKINNERS, JOHN RILEY, and THE CHERRY TREE CAROL. SKINNERS takes on a jolly little lilt and bounce and the conversation between Crego and the skinner sounds for all the world like two British sissies discussing the weather over tea and crumpets. JOHN RILEY likewise fails because of this extreme attempt to Europeanize and refine into "proper" musical terms. It loses everything that made it beautiful, as does THE CHERRY TREE CAROL in Dyer-Bennet's

overly-complex version. This, to me, is not the way to sing folk songs, no matter how pleasant the tenor voice and how refined the guitar may be. Folk song without folk style is nothing. Dyer-Bennet's singing is beginning to resemble that of Dennis Day's, and he is nowhere nearly as effective as he was in the earlier albums of this series.

There is one funny song (not intentionally) in the album that serves well as a self-satire on this type of singing and that is THE BRITISH LIGHT DRAGOONS, a song so full of airy tra-la-la's and bounding trills that one cannot help suppressing a knowing snicker and reaching for a New Lost City Ramblers album.

#### SONGS OF THE MICHIGAN LUMBERJACKS (Library of Congress AAFSL 56)

All the songs except one on this album are from a single 1938 collecting trip by Alan Lomax. The extremely specialized nature of the record will limit its general interest; and the whiskery, bunk-house singing of the 'jacks is not as musically exciting as the performing heard on most Archive records. The dedicated student of folk song style and origin will, interestingly enough, find a definite Irish rant in most of the songs and singing -- and the picker who enjoys singing virile out-of-doors ballads

will find a wealth of "new" material for his repertoire on the disc. (After all, isn't everybody sick of THE FROZEN LOGGER by now!) Songs such as JACK HAGGERTY, ONCE MORE A-LUMBERING GO, and THE WILD MUSTARD RIVER are works of fine tune and text, and learning them should provide a rewarding challenge for the contemporary performer.

#### FIDDLER BEERS: WALKIE IN THE PARLOR (Folkways 2376)

Concert violinist and sometime folksinger Don "Fiddler" Beers turns to the psaltery on this disc to accompany himself and wife Evelyne in a program of unique Irish-American folk songs. Most of the songs were "pieced together" by Beers from memories of his fiddling Irish grandfather, or collected from friends. Although the chief interest in the album will be in the unusual nature of the material, some may find such imagery as:

"First they made the earth, and then  
they made the sky;

And then they made the clouds so  
white and hung 'em up to dry."  
a bit feeble and "unfolk." And lyrics that read:

"With a smile in his sad dark eyes,  
More tender than words could be,  
But I was nuthin' to him,  
Though he was the world to me."  
seem to smack more of James Whitcomb Riley than of folk poetry.

The performances of the tunes are equally unusual -- wavering indecisively between

polite parlor singing (Beers' pleasant but self-conscious delivery) and formal art song (the untrained but polished soprano of Mrs. Beers). Ask your record store clerk to play you OLD JIM GRAY, WALKIE IN THE PARLOR, and JOHNNIE COME A'COURTIN' to hear a representative sampling of the Beers' singing. (Reviewer: Gil Edmundson)

PETE AND MIKE SEEGER: INDIAN SUMMER  
Original Sound Track Music (Folkways 3851)

Hearing Pete sing, as he generally does, to a simple bump-ditty accompaniment tends to occasionally lull us into forgetting just what a really brilliant musician he is. But like the cavalry riding up in the nick of time, Pete will every so often spring an album such as this one on us as a reminder -- an imaginative and artistic exploration into pure folk-derived musicianship that is stunning in its originality and pure simplicity of concept.

The score of the film INDIAN SUMMER occupies one side of the disc, and was improvised by Pete and Mike with the facilities of their entire bag of instruments (ten by my count) and up to nine tracks of multiple dubbing at their disposal. The brothers showed amazing restraint in the face of such technical complexity -- where the obvious danger is in becoming chaotic.

Since I have not seen the film, I cannot evaluate the INDIAN SUMMER score as film music (i.e. how well it integrates with,

comments upon, and reinforces the impact of the visual image). As pure music, however, the score stands solidly on its own merits -- an all-too-often lacking characteristic in contemporary filmmusic in general.

Since composition in the folk music genre is a cumulative process, it can be expected that Pete and Mike drew upon their repertoire of musical ideas to build the abstract interplay of mood that makes up the score. Ideas from MEADOWLAND pop up at times, for instance; and at one point Mike saws away at a fiddle theme that greatly resembles THE YOUNG MAN WHO WOULDN'T HOE CORN.

The original opening and closing theme of INDIAN SUMMER, for all its simplicity, is a major accomplishment in contemporary folk music composition; and its mood of sun and wind and movement and clean, open air speaks as much for the imagination and sensitivity of the Seegers as it does for their mastery of the style of traditional music from which they drew the inspiration for it. It is such a beautiful piece of music that it seems a shame it appears only on an album of limited general interest, and won't be heard more widely than it will be. How about releasing it as a single, Mr. Asch?

The only qualification to the recording of the score (but one which prevents ranking it alongside its excellent predecessors

THE GOOFING OFF SUITE and NONESUCH) is that the sound effects from the film, including the sounds of a roaring fire and a dynamite explosion, are retained in the recording. It is true that the music is built around these sounds, but they prove too startling to the listener who hasn't seen the film and is neither prepared for them nor understands their significance.

The flip side of the disc contains sound track music from three film shorts: Norman McLaren's HORIZONTAL LINES and Pete's THE MANY COLORED PAPER and THE COUNTRY FIDDLE. The best of these is the score of THE MANY COLORED PAPER, which finds Pete in an interpretive exercise involving the gradual abstraction of the Christmas-y musical ideas of DECK THE HALLS.

The album as a whole is certainly of more importance than its obvious role as an aural souvenir of the four represented films. Those seriously interested in Pete's work in building onto and out of our musical traditions will find it a stimulating musical experience.

Incidentally, if Folkways plans future recordings of sound track music, there is some extraordinarily good folk music to be heard on the sound track of TO HEAR MY BANJO PLAY that is not currently available. How about it? (Reviewer: Gil Edmundson)

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS, Volume 3.  
(Folkways 2398)

Stand back, folks, here they come again; stompin' and singing to beat the band -- those high-steppin', fiddlin' and pickin' funmakers from New York City; The New Lost City Ramblers with another discful of the best music made north of Dracula, Georgia. These three young fellows, gentlemen and scholars all (as well as fine singers, ingenious instrumentalists, and honest and engaging showmen), once again present a rare, vivid, and most unique program of old-time country song -- the music which has been hidden away all too long in the files of a few dedicated collectors and in the musty vaults of stingy and fearful record companies. Although the Ramblers will probably never produce a record that will replace their first LP as my sentimental favorite NLCR album, this newest effort is in many ways their best to date. John Cohen's liner notes point out the reason: "Although we learn our songs from old records, we are finding our own voices after all...we have found that we are getting to sound more like the New Lost City Ramblers than anything else." And though the boys do demonstrate a growing cohesiveness in their ensemble work, I feel their most important improvement is that individually they are acquiring the most difficult-to-imitate flavor of the country musician -- the ability not only to convey the wildness and the craziness of his music, but to



infuse it with the pathos that seems always to go hand in hand with the hard-nosed humor of the hillbilly. A good example is John's TALKING HARD LUCK. "...I can remember the very first day when I was born, too. There's just three of us kids, we's lying there side by side on the bed... my old man..he walked up to the bed an' taken one look at us, he called to my Ma... says 'All right Liza, come on in here an' pick out the one ya want,' he says, 'We'll drown the rest of them'...Ya know, there's just seventeen of us kids, there's eight boys, seven girls and two other children..". Similar emotional response is generated by the song THE MAN WHO WROTE 'HOME SWEET HOME' NEVER WAS A MARRIED MAN. One hardly knows whether to laugh or cry.

The musicianship in this new disc ranges from the solidly traditional (Tom Paley and Mike Seeger battling it out with fiddle and banjo on FLY AROUND MY PRETTY LITTLE MISS) to some sounds new to the Ramblers: the interplay in HOT CORN, COLD CORN (the first recording of this great old number for the city folk trade) between John's laconic, drawling singing and the jivey, raggy mandolin breaks pumped out by Mike -- an outstanding example of what Alan Lomax would perhaps call "good hillbilly jazz."

Mike's solo old-time ballad, a customary feature (and often the high point) of every Rambler program, is Basil May's famous version of LADY OF CARLISLE. Though I feel his sister Peggy's freer interpre-

tation is slightly more successful, Mike is here admirably close to the bone.

Anyone who has listened to many old hillbilly records knows that a lot of them were not intended for Aunt Matilda (my favorite: BANGIN' ANNIE, by the Bang Boys); and the Ramblers dive into their blue material with a relish: listen to Tom and Mike's tenor harmony merging into falsetto in SAL GOT A MEATSKIN -- revolving about some double entendre imagery that will raise even Ed McCurdy's eyebrows.

For the addict of hot, country instrumentals; Honest Tom provides a fantastic guitar rag (RAILROAD BLUES) in the manner of Uncle Dave Macon's old sidekick ("Hello, folks, this is Sam McGhee from Tennessee!"). For us classicists, the band that will be worn out first, is the ensemble instrumental BLACK MOUNTAIN RAG (similar to the version on your AAFSL 20), with Mike putting aside his fiddle bow for a moment to beat out part of the number by twanging the fiddle like a banjo!

There is apparently no limit to what the Ramblers can do with their source material -- everything they touch turns to gold. Needless to say, like all honest and faithful folk musicians in this day and age, these excellent young pickers are not receiving the acclaim that is due them and their music. Let all who hear them join the small, but clear, voice of LSR in proclaiming, "Well done, men, and carry on!"

THE TARRIERS: TELL THE WORLD ABOUT THIS  
(United Artists 8042)

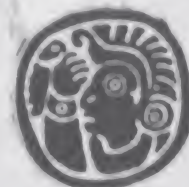
Eric Weissberg's galloping 3-finger style banjo is the only worthwhile item that the constantly-revamping Tarrriers can boast of: the rest of the LP is the same Ames Brothers-Four Freshmen folk-jazz vocalizing we have come to expect from this group and the many hundreds like it -- smooth as the feathers on a duck's back, and just about as easy to swallow. Eric's reformativ image kicks as much life into the songs as possible and his banjo solos ring with genuine excitement in the midst of pathetic surroundings. I think it is safe to assume that he is also responsible for the choosing of such non-folknik songs as RED APPLE JUICE, BILE THEM CABBAGE DOWN, and LITTLE MAGGIE. Which, I suppose, is a step in the right direction, even though they are all sung wretchedly. Put your needle down on JOHN HARDY for a sample of what the album is like. One practically falls asleep during the vocals, but when Eric picks, things suddenly come to life for a few seconds. Perhaps their next album should be one of instrumentals -- if Cooper and Carey could play with anything resembling competence, Weissberg could make things interesting. If they kept their mouths shut, one would not have to say that "The Tarrriers is a pretty doggy album." (Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

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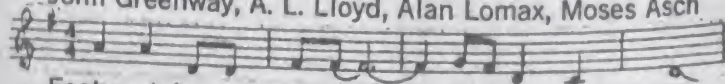
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CHILD BALLADS IN AMERICA, Volumes I & II.  
Sung by JEAN RITCHIE (Folkways 2301, 2302)

To the unsophisticated and open minded, there is a literary quality to be found in the Child ballads that is of a charm that has seldom been matched by formal poets. The awkwardness of the verse and the quaintness of the imagery is the hallmark of this most primitive of our literature, and the ballads rely upon the vivid imagination and wholehearted empathy of the listener for understanding. They are even vaguely participatory in that the emotion they generate is not always contained within the song itself (being generally highly understated), but must come directly from the heart of the listener or singer.

What is the source of their gripping power, the inner substance of these odd tales? The centuries of oral transmission that have given them their rough, poetic charm have also pruned them into fragmentary and not always coherent stories. Some seem like half-remembered dreams and nightmares; symbolic outpourings of beautiful and terrible themes; a "forgotten language" (to borrow a term from Eric Fromm) that, could we but read it, would tell us of the most primal conflicts and drives of the Anglo-American people. A great study yet remains to be made of the inner content of the ballads. One would discover, perhaps, THE CRUEL MOTHER a

statement in symbolic folk language, not merely of the sin and guilt of infanticide, but of conflict, dating from a turbulent era of pre-history, between the tribal laws of matriarchy (the bond of the blood) and patriarchy (abstract social law). Even on the surface, the ballads illustrate unchanging aspects of Western life. I don't doubt that a dose of the remedy administered to GENTLE FAIR JENNY would solve 90 per cent of the social evils presented as entertainment on our TV "family comedy" shows.

Two hundred years of American puritanism and pragmatism have changed the Child ballads in a manner that reveals more than a little about the American character. These subtle changes, present even in Jean Ritchie's relatively pure family variants (compare her LORD BATEMAN heard here with the LLOYD BATEMAN on AAFSL 57), may be exemplified by EDWARD. Jean's EDWARD is depicted as having murdered his brother-in-law rather than his brother (removing the uncomfortable element of sibling rivalry), and the identity of the questioner who calls him "dear love" (his incestuous mother) is never even hinted at.

Jean's family variants, many perhaps directly traceable back to the first American Ritchie in 1768, are sung here with a perfect fusion of traditional purity and strong personal statement. Her singing of THE TWO SISTERS gives us

a rare chance to compare her performance with the one she recorded for the Library of Congress (AAFSL 57) in 1946. Amazingly enough, 14 years of extensive world travel and exposure to metropolitan life haven't interfered with her natural development as a ballad singer. In integrity and in quality of traditional artistry she stands absolutely unmatched among American professional folksingers -- first, foremost, and without peer. These sides are among the best she has ever made, and will occupy a prize position in anyone's library of recorded folk music.

I can offer no explanation for the skiminess of the albums' notes. A brief, touching paragraph on the meaning of the songs to her family is included by Jean, and the texts of the songs are reproduced. But that is all. It is inexplicable that a perceptive scholar like Ken Goldstein, the editor of the volumes, was not allowed to comment analytically and historically on the Child collection in general and Jean's American variants in particular. Such a serious omission greatly curtails the educational value of the set to students and literature classes, and is strictly contrary to the traditional Folkways policy.

Listening to a singer of Jean's caliber perform these ballads must certainly be one of the most unique esthetic experiences in world culture -- a plaintive, homespun voice sprung from backwoods America musing poetically over the memories of a time

when the English speaking peoples were still young. If such a prospect is as thrilling to the reader as it is to LSR, these extraordinary discs are unreservedly recommended to your prompt attention.

Editors' Note: Ken Goldstein informs us that the first edition of this set was released prematurely and without the complete booklet of notes. Present releases are thoroughly annotated.

#### MUDDY WATERS AT NEWPORT (Chess 1449)

In 1941, in Stovall, Mississippi, Alan Lomax recorded a number of songs by a cotton plantation hand named McKinley Morganfield, who earned small change by playing guitar and singing at dances and parties. Nineteen years later, at Newport for the 1960 Jazz Festival and using his nickname professionally now, was Muddy Waters, a professional blues singer with his own 5-man band. How much has he changed? The Library of Congress recordings reveal a shy, somewhat uncertain singer with a thin voice performing folk blues to his own bottle-neck guitar accompaniment in a complex, introspective style. Gone now is any hint of uncertainty -- Muddy now booms and shouts the blues. Over the years, the guitar became electric and other instruments (piano, electric harmonica, bass, drums) were added. Nevertheless, Muddy still retains the spirit and essence of the good, gutty Mississippi country blues that he began

with. There is electric guitar, true, but this is the way modern blues are played -- and Muddy is the best exponent of this up-dated country blues style. He really PLAYS the guitar on this record -- he has gone back to bottle-neck and a more earthy sound. Most of the songs are done in a wide-open full-blast Saturday-Nite let's-swing! style that should knock anyone off their chairs. Most of the cuts here were originally on other Chess releases, but even if you have them this album is worth getting anyway, because you've never heard them like this. Maybe it's the "in concert" sound, but the songs here have a lot more fire and power than the studio-cut sides. An added highlight is the Otis Spann sung blues composed by Langston Hughes to the then dying Jazz Festival. The blues roll on...and people like Muddy Waters keep them rolling and stomping. This is Muddy as he is today -- his best in a long time. (Reviewer: Dave Glover)

#### PEGGY SEEGER: AMERICAN FOLKSONGS FOR BANJO (Folk-Lyric 114)

Although this record is designed to illustrate the various stylistic capabilities of the 5-string banjo in the hands of an expert, it must be stated that, at the same time, the disc is a much more satisfactory display of Peggy Seeger's multitudinous gifts as singer, instrumentalist,

innovator, and composer than was her recent Prestige BEST OF.. album.

The student of the banjo will find here 14 songs employing 14 different combinations of strums, tunings, and figures -- all of which are discussed at length in Peggy's Hargail Press banjo book. Those who pick the banjo themselves will have the strongest opinions on Peggy's banjoistic ideas. While her playing delights me at the same time it turns me green with envy, I did feel that HIRAM HUBBARD, while sung outstandingly, was here given an accompaniment too harmonically rich for its clean melodic line.

The less technically oriented listener will find in these same 14 songs the best city folk singing and playing (by which I mean that Peggy intends to resemble only in essence the musicians heard on documentary and field recordings) to be heard on LP since Kapp's FOLK SONG SATURDAY NIGHT (Kapp 1110). The best of the songs point up the unique and valuable character of Peggy's ever-fresh repertoire. Rare songs such as DANDOO, EDWIN IN THE LOWLANDS, and A-WALKING AND A-TALKING (a version of THE CUCKOO) are not to be heard elsewhere. Peggy's singing voice is once again relaxed and much less shrill than it has appeared on her recent discs.

Her delicious wit gets full play in TURNIP GREENS, an insane text from Randolph's collection to which Peggy has

set her own tune and produced a sample of the story-telling talking banjo piece which is the hillbilly's equivalent of the Western hobo's talking guitar blues. With Peggy's poker-faced narration of the wild tale backed by her chuckling banjo, the number couldn't be more tremendous fun.

Peggy has also composed a melody for a ballad text called FAIR ROSAMUND, and it is so flowing and graceful that it could easily pass for traditional music. The song fits naturally and comfortably alongside Peggy's singing of HANDSOME MOLLY, THE TWO SISTERS, and WILLIE MOORE.

There are also 6 instrumentals on the disc (rounding the number of cuts out to 20) that may be an indication of the nature of Peggy's future work in folk music. They are fiddle tunes adapted to the banjo. Peggy says of them: "They are the result of an experiment in which I am trying to find, for British musicians who wish to play the 5-string banjo, a non-American way to adapt the instrument to British folk material. The flavor, especially the type of decorations, of the tunes has changed noticeably from fiddle to banjo but the essentials are still there."

The record comes with a full booklet (as do all Folk-Lyric records) in which Peggy explains the banjo for each song -- but please don't expect beginning instruction. Peggy assumes in her discussion a good working knowledge of banjo playing on the part of her reader. But banjo player or not, anyone sensitive to the sound of good singing and playing by

a terrific gal and superb musician can't afford to pass this one by. If your music store has difficulty in stocking Folk-Lyric (which is still a young, struggling company), the record can be ordered direct from the company at 3323 Morning Glory Ave., Baton Rouge 8, La. Price is \$4.98, plus 35¢ for postage.

OLD-TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S  
(Folkways 2355)

As unpretentious as its title, as nostalgic as the emotional associations roused in one by the names of Clarence Ashley and The Carolina Tar Heels, and as simple and touching as "Old-Timey" music itself, this record is a prize which will soon be lovingly worn to a nubbin by the few hundred American folk fans who have, in the last couple of years, fallen under the rollicking, ricky-tick spell cast by old-time string band music. Though some may be tempted to compare the disc with John Cohen's MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY (Folkways 2317), such a comparison is neither valid nor necessary. Collectors Ralph and Richard Rinzler have not attempted a documentary of the depth and breadth of Cohen's disc. Whereas John presented a broad panorama of play, religious, and topical song; the Rinzlers have limited their collection to the lighter, more informal music performed by Ashley and his relatives and friends for their own enjoyment. The record is

exactly as the title implies: OLD TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S. And while there are some tremendously good musicians to be heard here, none of them display the emotional, intense, and highly personal artistry of Roscoe Holcombe.

The most admirable quality of the record is that the Rinzlers have documentarily spanned the better part of a century of mountain musical style without looking farther than a single family. Clarence's sister, Eva Ashley Moore, sings in the oldest style -- the clear, high pitched mountain style whose origin is lost in the green American hills of the Blue Ridge and the Cumberlands. Mrs. Moore's voice is exceptionally sweet and true, and she is a stylist of the first rank. And though her song, a sentimental old "ballit book" number that would be scorned by a folklorist, is not an important one; hers is the finest singing heard on the record. Next in chronological order is the singing of Clarence himself -- the steppin' tunes and banjo singing of the quilting parties and "lassy makin'" (molasses) bees. This style, of course, is the direct source of old-time music; and most of the younger musicians on the set have learned from and built upon such performing. Appropriately enough, the newest singing on the record is that of 13 year old Tommy Moore, Eva's son, who belts out a version of the old SILVER DAGGER love song in a



well-developed traditional style that retains much of the old-time nuance along with its distinctly modern projection and clear, rhythmic phrasing. Tommy is going to be quite a singer by the time he is grown.

The various cuts of string band playing likewise adhere to the record's theme: that folk music is a PROCESS and not an object. Here are sizzling ensemble renditions of everything from SALLY ANN and PRETTY LITTLE PINK to the Bill Monroe tear-jerker FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW. The band members of particular interest to folk fans are: fiddler Gaither Carlton, a student of G. B. Grayson's; Sam Johnson, who learned guitar as a boy by watching Sam and Kirk McGhee of Dave Macon's Fruit Jar Drinkers; and a blind banjo and guitar virtuoso named Doc Watson, who has apparently mastered almost every existing new and old traditional style of playing both instruments.

Most important of all is the amazing quality of aliveness exuded by the music. Here are the oldtimers who first brought traditional music to records; as well as the youngsters who have learned and continue to learn from both oral and mass media sources -- from grandfather to grandson, from corn shucking bees to records to thousands of eager listeners and players. A process as natural as it is beautiful, the music goes on and on.

The excellent and complete booklet of notes by the Rinzlers sets the tone of the record. It is extremely well-written, and contains a family history of the Ashleys that is rich in Americana -- tales of Clarence Ashley's childhood, his medicine show travels, his relationships with legendary musicians such as G. B. Grayson and Hobart Smith, and his role in the pioneer days of hillbilly recording as a member of a number of famous groups: The Carolina Tar Heels, Byrd Moore's Hotshots, Charlie Monroe's Kentucky Pardners, and The Stanley Brothers. Eugene Earl has provided a discography of Ashley's fabulous recording career in the 20's and 30's. A few of these may be heard on Folkways' Anthology, but the bulk have been lost indefinitely to the public who wants to hear them. This deplorable manifestation of the greed and cultural boorishness of the big record companies makes documentary LP's such as this one all the more priceless.

EWAN MacCOLL: POPULAR SCOTTISH SONGS  
(Folkways 8757)  
THE BEST OF EWAN MacCOLL (Prestige 13004)  
THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS  
(CHILD BALLADS) (Folkways 3509)

The billing of Jeannie Robertson on her forthcoming Prestige LP as "World's Greatest Folk Singer" has prompted a good deal of discussion among friends and acquaintances of mine. Many of them seem to think

the title completely meaningless -- the remainder feel it belongs to Ewan MacColl.

Imagine, if you can, an American singer who could sing levee camp hollers, trail herding songs, old modal ballads, hillbilly breakdowns, and blues -- each in its authentic traditional style and with its original musical and emotional content intact. Such a thing is impossible, of course. But although the folksong of the British Isles is not nearly so diverse as that of the United States, this is what Ewan MacColl has done with the songs of Britain. The Gaelic idylls; the great and mystic ballads from all corners of Britain; topical and street songs; songs of the pub, the whaler, the fusileer, the herder, the gambler -- all are at MacColl's command, with their original lilt, burr, brogue, or nasal Cockney recognizable and artistically rendered. A truly monumental achievement in folksinging! MacColl has fortunately been widely recorded, and the fact that his work is rapidly becoming known and appreciated far and wide in both America and Great Britain speaks well for the future validity of the folksong "revivals" of both countries.

Of these three newest records, *THE BEST OF EWAN MACCOLL*, containing tunes from almost all areas of his incredible repertoire as well as a song of his own composition, is the most representative of the scope of his performing. Even listeners unused to traditional British performing will have no trouble understanding the

desolate loneliness of the whaling song *FAREWELL TO TARWATHIE*; the conscious and subconscious terror of *THE CRUEL MOTHER*; the exquisite and erotic beauty of *THE FOGGY DEW*; or the poignancy of *TATTIES AN' HERRIN'*, a song which MacColl describes as "a real cry from the heart of a people who have known more than their share of poverty and hard times." The recording of the album is exceptionally good; and MacColl is accompanied by two long-time associates: Alf Edwards (concertina, oc-arena) and Peggy Seeger (guitar, banjo). For those who wish to become acquainted with MacColl's singing, but who are baffled as to where to begin in the sheer numerical magnitude of available MacColl recordings, I would recommend this record, along with *CLASSIC SCOTS BALLADS* (Tradition 1015) and *THE NEW BRITON GAZETTE* (Folkways 8732), as the best introduction to MacColl for American listeners.

Folkways' *POPULAR SCOTTISH SONGS* is actually a re-recording of MacColl's Riverside album *SCOTS FOLK SONGS* (RLP 12-609) with these exceptions: included in the new album are *BONNIE ANNIE* and *EPPIE MAURIE*; excluded is *DAVIE FAA*. Not only is the recording quality of the Folkways superior to the older disc; MacColl's performing is better and more assured. And Peggy Seeger's instrumental and vocal assistance is far superior to the original provided by Brian Daly and Alf Edwards.

It would take an extremely stone-hearted (and stone-eared) purist to object to her banjo and guitar backing as traditionally inappropriate.

Judging by the subject matter, the most "popular" themes in Scots song would seem to be pursuit of war (HIGHLAND MUSTER ROLL, WARS OF GERMANY, JOHNNIE COPE, WEE WEE GERMAN LAIRDIE) and pursuit of the lassies (KISSIN'S NO SIN, EPPIE MAURIE, LASSIE WI' THE YELLOW COATIE). All are sung in the brilliant MacColl manner -- rich with nuance and rolling in Highland dialect.

The Folkways CHILD BALLAD album finds MacColl working in a style he vividly describes on the notes to the above mentioned Prestige disc: "Here (in the 'free' songs) I am not concerned with with shaped rhythms but with pulse and line, with constantly altering the balance between angle and curve. My objective is not to create a pretty tune but to make a valid musical comment on the story that is being unfolded..". Those who were fortunate enough to see MacColl on his recent U.S. tour will instantly recognize this phase of his balladry. Head held high, hand cocked behind ear, he is oblivious to his hearers, aware only of the music being created within and flowing forth. His unaccompanied singing on this album will seem especially rich in decoration to Americans used to a more level, rhythmically accompanied, vocal style.



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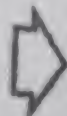
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In addition, the folklore scholar or literature student will find here the original British versions of Child Ballads not often found in America, in addition to the songs known both here and abroad. Among the familiar are LORD RANDALL, OUR GOODMAN (known as FOUR NIGHTS DRUNK to us less scholarly folks), and an exceptionally beautiful BAWBEE ALLAN. Among the songs that have not widely crossed the Atlantic are THE BATTLE OF HARLAW (#163), THE RANT-IN' LADDIE (#240), and THE BURNING OF AUCHENDOWN (#183). Altogether, MacColl at his deepest and most artistic; and recommended to those who are well into the study of MacColl's work and his source material.

A TREASURY OF FIELD RECORDINGS Vol. One  
("77" Records 77LA12-2)

Compiled by Mack McCormick, this collection is "A panorama of the traditions found in Houston, Texas -- the city and its neighboring bayous, plains, beaches, prisons, plantations, and piney woods...". The interest here is in documenting the music as an active force in the lives of both whites and Negroes in Texas, and the only outstanding individual performer heard is the well-known Lightnin' Hopkins.

The Negro music is of most importance, and, unlike the white music (which seems collected and organized rather indiscriminately) demonstrates a coherent order of surviving styles from primitive to modern. Exemplifying these stages, one might begin

with the prison field recordings, GRIZZLY BEAR, MISTER GATOR, and YELLOW GAL; progress to the primitive guitar solo K.C. AIN'T NOTHING BUT A RAG and the harmonica-guitar duet of CRYIN' WON'T MAKE ME STAY; and on to the more modern styling of Hopkins on CORRINA and ending with a piano improvisation. Included between these division points are a number of fine blues and a rare recording of a concertina-fiddle-washboard band composed of expatriate Louisiana Negroes who speak and sing in a Creole French patois.

Of most interest among the white singing will be the three verses of STREETS OF LAREDO sung by the famous Lomax informant, Harry Stephens, and an unusual BALLAD OF DAVY CROCKETT by Mrs. Melton, a witty little old Houston lady.

Though the album contains a 60-page booklet with song texts and rather complete bibliographical and discographical references, what the set seems to lack is the poetic editorial insight and firm organizing hand of an Alan Lomax. Nevertheless, those who like their folk music in the raw will find this an enjoyable documentary. It may be adequately summarized by a quote of Lightnin' Hopkins': "The idea of it is that everybody round here plays music or makes songs or something. That's white peoples, colored peoples, that's them funny French talking peoples, that's everybody what I mean -- they all of 'em got music." (Reviewer: Karen Glover)

Editors' Note: "77" records often prove

difficult to obtain, since they are produced in England by Doug Dobell in lots of only 100, and sell like hotcakes. We suggest you write immediately to DOBELL'S JAZZ RECORD SHOP, 77 Charing Cross Road, London W.C.2, and try to reserve a copy. The postpaid price is 39/9d (\$5.57)

RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT: KID STUFF An EP.  
(English Columbia seg 8046)

Jack, who has not always been done justice by English Columbia, is left pretty much to his own devices on this little disc. There is backing of a commercial sort, but it is completely unobtrusive. Four of the six songs are top-flight; and the best cut is a toss-up between the delightful HOWDIDO and MY DADDY RIDES THAT PLANE IN THE SKY. Both are absolutely first-rate as folksongs, Woody songs, and kids' songs; and Jack's performance is impeccable. Children and Guthrie fans alike will find nothing wrong with WHY OH WHY? or THE CAR SONG either, but the jazzy treatments of THE FOX (the only non-Guthrie song on the record, and a much maligned number anyhow) and HEY RATTLER will go against some -- this reviewer included. All in all, however, KID STUFF is absolutely irresistible stuff; and one whiff of HOWDIDO has been known to make a Guthrie fan race off an airmail order to Ken Lindsay in England to get it!

NEXT ISSUE: Review on JACK ELLIOTT SINGS SONGS OF WOODY GUTHRIE AND JIMMY RODGERS.

(CHICAGO FOLK FESTIVAL continued....)  
guitar counterpart. After Alan Ribback's lecture on "Urban Folk Music", we ran into effervescent Frank Hamilton, who seemed to be bubbling over with enthusiasm for his forthcoming Audiophile LP. Following lunch, an odd panel discussion with the improbable title of "The Value of Tradition in Folk Music" was held with John Cohen, Frank Warner, Alan Mills, and Richard Chase comprising the panel. The pointlessness of the topic and Mills' patronizing attitude toward the rest of the panel sank the discussion before it ever got off the ground. Frank Warner got off the most lucid comment: "What good is tradition in folk music! You might as well ask what good is tobacco in a cigarette!" Roscoe Holcombe walked out on the meeting, doubtlessly puzzling over the strange workings of the city mind. Near the back of the auditorium, the man who could have blown up the whole thing in 30 seconds sat quietly smoking his eternal pipe. It was Horton Barker, and if he had only stood up and sang one verse of BARBRY ELLEN, he could have sent everybody away completely satisfied as the "value" of tradition in folk music. After the panel had roundly agreed that tradition was necessary to folk music, everyone hurried downstairs to attend Mike Seeger's lecture on the evolution of Bluegrass, illustrated with a series of vintage country records that included Texas Gladden, The Carter

Family, and Bill and Charlie Monroe. After the lecture, Mike hung around answering questions and autographing banjos. Some youngsters talked him into singing a few numbers for them; and Mike amiably complied, doing a beautiful BUTCHER'S BOY on the banjo. When we left, he was still sitting in a stream of sunlight, singing and playing for his rapt audience in the large, empty room. Downstairs, in Noyes Hall Auditorium, a huge assemblage of folkniks were settling down for a marathon four hour hoot. None of them seemed to mind that they weren't in tune, and they sang and argued their way through the complete Kingston Trio repertoire, strumming their Harmony and Kay guitars to beat the band.

We had the privilege of engaging Roscoe Holcombe in a private conversation. Roscoe is a man's man who returns your handshake firmly and looks you straight in the eye when he speaks to you. He is slender and soft-spoken -- yet tough enough to have endured a hard life in the Kentucky coal mines. Twice mine accidents have extracted the toll of a broken back from his body. We talked of farming, unionism, the depression in Kentucky, his friends and his music. Rossie is an extremely intelligent and articulate person. His feeling for people and his complete immersion in life give his conversation a sensitive, almost visionary quality. There is only one real topic of conversation with him, and that is the meaning of human experience. His every word is a reflection of his thought-

fulness and deep insight -- he wouldn't know the meaning of "small talk." He speaks of the people of his region with the poeticism of a good writer, and he knows and understands their poverty, their violence, and their lonelinesses. When the talk inevitably got around to music, we asked him about the musical likes of the young people of his home country in Perry County. "They like the old-time music," he said, "but they don't hear much of it anymore." The radio and TV are an inexorable force; stifling and repressing to the Kentucky way of life, and it fades away year by year. He hadn't heard Tom Paley yet, but thought Mike and John played well together. "That Mike -- he's going to be a real good musician one day." This is high praise coming from a man who, with absolutely no false modesty, refers to his own guitar and banjo picking as "what little I play." Finally the spell was broken when Mike's beautiful wife, Margie, came to get Rossie. We watched him walk away, wondering if we had talked with a great man -- or a man who only seemed so because he had miraculously come to us from a time and place before the race of Americans had fallen.

Later, as we sat resting our weary feet listening to a half-dozen fellows talking guitar technique, who should come flapping along but Tom Paley, sporting an enormous pair of galoshes and loaded down with photographic equipment. Hearing the drift of the talk, Honest Tom hurried off to

fetch his beat-up old Martin, and was soon picking and singing and slapping his galoshes up and down to keep time. He sang us a nicely flavored JACKERO, and then played BUCK DANCER'S CHOICE and then played of Sam McGhee's old routines. When the talk got around to guitar picking heard on old country 78's, Tom began playing samples of everything from McGhee to Gary Davis.

Out in the Noyes Hall lobby, a waft of bluegrass breeze had blown in Paul Prestopino and Marsh Brickman. They recruited a couple of the better folknik guitarists and soon TEN BROOKS AND MOLLY was ringing through the halls; featuring Paul's mandolin playing and drowning out the weary girls who were still doggedly bellowing CROSSING THAT JORDEN RIVER.

Then it was time for the Saturday night concert, and the Stanleys led off with a terrific country show featuring everything from an ARKANSAS TRAVELLER skit to old-time buck-and-wing dancing by the bass player. Memphis Slim and Willie Dixon, two huge men who wouldn't look out of place in the defensive line of the Bears, played some easy blues. They didn't work too hard, and restricted their program to mostly lighter numbers. BEER DRINKING WOMAN was good fun, and their best number. Sandy Paton surprised us all with a beautifully sung SHE MOVED THROUGH THE FAIR. He has gotten a lot better since he last recorded, and his singing of songs from the British

Isles is now something to hear. Frank Proffitt seemed very shy and nervous Saturday night. He sang and played (on his homemade banjo) the original TOM DOOLEY, and it was very hard to hear him. On Sunday, we understand, he really opened up and put on a great show. Horton Barker again stole the show on Saturday night. He had been listening to all the previous audience participation numbers in the concerts, and, deciding this was how things were done in the city, came on like an elderly Pete Seeger! "This is your rigamarole," he announced as he carefully instructed us how to join him in singing the "Bow and balance to me" refrain on TWO SISTERS. He was delighted when the audience chorused out the line with him. After singing an incredibly lovely PRETTY SALLY, he sang a snatch of a tune he remembered from his youth; a topical song from the Spanish-American war about "settling Cuba free." The audience roared when Horton chuckled, "Looks like we're gonna have to go down there and do it again!" Again due to Alan Mills, the timing of the show got completely out of whack; and the concert (after his stint) turned into a race against the 12:30 curfew to get the remainder of the acts on for at least one number apiece. Mills ignored Terkel's admonitions against encores, and made a brilliant false start toward the

wings after each number. If there was one polite handclap from the crowd, there he was -- back at the mike again. Even open booing and shouts of "Get off the stage!" from some of the more outspoken members of the audience failed to faze the rotund man from Canada. The program never recovered. Bob Atcher, an old-time cowboy singer a la the early Gene Autry, seemed pleased as punch to be on the show. During his introductions he just couldn't seem to tell us enough. By this time, members of the audience who had come to hear Mrs. Cotten and Roscoe Holcombe were getting panicky. The Ramblers gallantly waived their performance to get Roscoe in front of the mike before closing time. He did two stunning numbers, one apiece on banjo and guitar -- although he had told us he had been promised a half-hour, not even enough time in the first place "to get my fingers warmed up." Libba Cotten likewise was held to two numbers (Mills must have been proud of himself); and The Ramblers had time for three hasty numbers themselves before the curtain fell to a poetic good-night-ladies spiel by Terkel. We stood talking to Mike Seeger as he packed up his instruments and tape recorder in the dark, vast, empty auditorium. And despite the maddening folkniks, Alan Mills, the chaos and the pressures of big-time concert formats, we voted an emphatic YES to the U of C Folk Music Festival. In fact, we're already waiting for next year's.

THE EDITORS



News from Prestige-International's recording schedule: Coming up are THE BEST OF CYNTHIA GOODING..ROBIN ROBERTS..A. L. LLOYD ISLA CAMERON..GUY CARAWAN..; more discs from Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger; THE THREE SISTERS, featuring Peggy, Barbara, and Penny Seeger; an album of Irish and Scots songs from the MacPeake Family; 3 or so discs by Obray Ramsay; 2 albums @ by Rosalie Sorrels, Pick Temple, and J. Barre Toelken; a John Greenway album; FLAMENCO! by Alvarado and Reguera; young Bonnie Dobson's disc debut; and a Civil War album by Frank Warner and his two sons! How's that for a great line-up of things to come? And (perhaps best of all) news that Kenneth Goldstein will record HORTON BARKER for Prestige.

Oscar Brand: BAWDY SONGS GOES TO COLLEGE (Audio-Fidelity 1952)

Oscar Brand: UP IN THE AIR (on Elektra)  
THE DAUPHIN TRIO (Epic 3755)

Theo Bikel: FROM BONDAGE TO FREEDOM (on Elektra) The "many lands" bit.

RICHARD MALTBY SWINGS FOLK SONGS (on Roulette) Pee-yew!

Brownie and Sonny: DOWN HOME BLUES (Sharp 2003)

Verve will release 7 more Big Bill Broonzy albums as a follow-up to their new 5 LP set THE BILL BROONZY STORY (Verve 3000-5). Also discs by Memphis Slim, and Sister Rosetta Tharpe's mother, Katie Bell (with Diz Gillespie!)

THAT'S ALL FOR THIS MONTH, FOLKS!

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

BLIND GARY DAVIS: HARLEM STREET SINGER (Prestige-Bluesville 1015)

Ken Goldstein provides us with a brilliant hi-fi glimpse of a living legend. One of the year's Top Ten.

EWAN MacCOLL & ISLA CAMERON: STILL I LOVE HIM (Topic 10T50) English.

A charming and beautiful album that should go a long way restoring our faith in songs of the tender passion.

THE BEST OF PEGGY SEEGER (Prestige 13005)

Although the album fails to live up to the title, it must not be regarded lightly. Miss Seeger is one of our best.

THE BEST OF JEAN RITCHIE (Prestige 13003)

Any album by Jean Ritchie is of utmost importance, and this is a very nice one indeed.

JOHN BURGESS: THE ART OF THE BAGPIPE (Folk-Lyric 112)

Of limited interest, but important.

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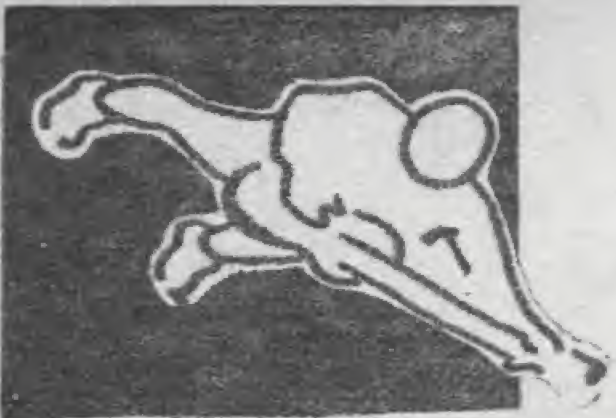
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THE LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW  
POETRY ROOM

On our cover this month is Honest Tom Paley, senior member of the New Lost City Ramblers, banjo- and guitar-picker extraordinaire, and victim of that most famous of all Washington Square jokes: One folknik says to another, "Do you know Tom Paley?" The other answers, "I used to, but I forgot the words." Tom appears with the Ramblers on everything they do (Folkways, Vanguard), and has had earlier outings on Elektra and Esoteric. Cover drawing is by Barbara Rauhala.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

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*By Paul Nelson & Jon Pankake*

Now that all of you out there have breathed your sigh of relief, let us tell you why we are so late this month. Money, believe it or not, had nothing to do with it. (Isn't that pleasant to hear?). What actually happened was that one of our editors got quite sick and was out of commission for well over three weeks and this held up production on #13 until just a few days ago. We hope to have #14 out in a couple of weeks so we can try to catch up on all of the new records (there are tons of them), but you know us when we promise anything. However, we will try ...

(continued on page 52)

## ----- SEEGER FOUND GUILTY -----

Most LSR readers have probably learned from their newspaper or radio that Pete was found guilty of contempt of congress by a federal court jury in New York on April 4 for refusing to answer questions on communism before the house un-American activities committee in 1955. What was not heard on the mass news media was Pete's statement at the conclusion of the trial. We reproduce it here so that Pete's fans and friends can hear his own views on the trial.

"Thank you, your honor. After hearing myself talked about, pro and con, for three days, I am grateful for the chance to say a few unrestricted words.

First, I should like to thank my lawyer for his masterly presentation of my defense. He has worked over many long weeks and months, knowing that it is beyond my power to pay him adequately for his work. I believe that he, and great legal minds like Justice Hugo Black and Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn, have explained far better than I can why they believe the First Amendment gives an American citizen the right to refuse to speak upon occasion.

Secondly, I should like to state before this court, much as I did before Congressman Walter's committee, my conviction that I have never in my life said, or supported, or sung anything in any way subversive of my country. Congressman Walter stated that he was investigating a conspiracy. I stated under oath that I had never done

anything conspiratorial. If he doubted my word, why didn't he even question it? Why didn't he have me indicted for perjury? Because, I believe, even he knew that I was speaking the truth.

Some of my ancestors were religious dissenters who came to America over 300 years ago. Others were abolitionists in New England of the 1840's and 50's. I believe that in choosing my present course I do no dishonor to them, or to those who may come after me.

I am 42 years old, and count myself a very lucky man. I have a wife and three healthy children, and we live in a house we built with our own hands, on the banks of the beautiful Hudson River. For twenty years I have been singing folksongs of American and other lands to people everywhere. I am proud that I have never refused to sing to any group of people because I might disagree with some of the ideas of some of the people listening to me. I have sung for rich and poor, for Americans of every possible political and religious opinion and persuasion, of every race, color, and creed.

The House Committee wished to pillory me because it didn't like some few of the many thousands of places I have sung for. Now it so happens that the specific song whose title was mentioned in this trial, WASN'T THAT A TIME, is one of my favorites. The song is apropos to this case. I wonder if I might have your permission to

sing it here before I close?"

(The judge refused the request with the words, "You may not.")

"Well, perhaps you will hear it some other time. A good song can only do good, and I am proud of the songs I have sung. I hope to be able to continue singing these songs for all who want to listen, Republicans, Democrats, and independents. Do I have the right to sing these songs? Do I have the right to sing them anywhere?"

\*\*\*\*\*

-----RECORD REVIEWS-----

CISCO HOUSTON SINGS THE SONGS OF WOODY GUTHRIE (Vanguard 9089)

Woody Guthrie once said of his old rambling companion, Cisco Houston: "Cisco likes hard hitting songs and hard hitting people. He likes to roam and to ramble, to walk, think, drink, eat, and talk with oil field rough-necks, timber slippers, mine crawlers, white collar city and town workers, with clerks, with folks on the ships, on trains, on fast wheeling river barges, and to meet and to sing with the people ... He's a man who likes most of all to meet new colors of people, newer colors of fields, hills, valleys, and new looking mountains under every color of sky."

With this in mind, it is easy to see

why Cisco, when he is in top form, can be such an excellent performer of Woody's songs. On this album, he is singing and playing better than he has for many years. Aided by some wonderful banjo, fiddle, and mandolin accompaniments by Eric Weissberg, Cisco here lays aside any hint of smoothness and superficiality and turns out his best LP since his Stinson and early 10" Folkways days. SONGS OF WOODY GUTHRIE may, in fact, be his best solo album. It is both surprising and joyful to be able to say this since, in recent disc outings, Cisco has been far from his old self. For after his great Stinson days with Woody (Stinson #44, 53) and his Folkways 10" COWBOY BALLADS and 900 MILES albums, his repertoire took on a lot of songs which did not fit well with his mode of performing (SLOOP JOHN B, ERIE CANAL, etc), and his style underwent similar changes-- this is especially apparent in CISCO SINGS, Folkways 2346). None of these shortcomings turn up on this LP. Both the songs and style (best described by LSR reader Craig Smith as a "terrific, open, hard travelling style") of singing them are exactly right.

Cisco sings his way through 18 of Woody's best songs here: 14 of them have been heard before on record (PASTURES OF PLENTY, SHIP IN THE SKY, COULEE DAM,

REUBEN JAMES, LADIES AUXILIARY, HARD AIN'T IT HARD, JESUS CHRIST, BUFFALO SKINNERS, PRETTY BOY FLOYD, PHILADELPHIA LAWYER, TALKING FISHING BLUES, RANGER'S COMMAND, DO RE MI, OLD DUSTY ROAD) and four of them are new. CURLY HEADED BABY is a fiddle and guitar romp that sounds like it might be a re-write of a commercial hillbilly tune, a kind of COLUMBUS STOCKADE type of song-- well sung here. DEPORTEES, I've always felt, is one of Woody's best songs (although someone else added the melody), full of that unique Guthrian blend of poetry and protest and the wonder of mankind -- beautiful in a real and commonplace way, not in an aesthetic. TAKING IT EASY is charming but minor, lightweight Guthrie (like PHILADELPHIA LAWYER); and OLD LONE WOLF, Woody's first radio theme song and my sentimental favorite on the album, is a long, lonesomey, full-of-fun howl ("Jest drop whatever you're a' doin'/ The ol' lone wolf is here to howl for you..") about Guthrie and a 25¢ songbook. Almost all 18 songs are the "best thing" on the record -- there are no weak cuts here. Probably the best examples of how good Cisco is on this LP are OLD LONE WOLF (has he ever cut loose like this before?) and TALKING FISHING BLUES, a high point of naturalness and personal expression in Cisco's career. Indeed, all through the album Cisco sings and plays with a wide-open, wonderful, almost rowdy, free-wheeling rambunctiousness that brings the songs fully to life and

(continued page 54)

THE SAMPLERS IN PERSON (Kapp 1232)

At last we have a new folksong group that does not subscribe to the Ivy League folkum style of the Kingston Trio (rhymes with AWAY RIO). The Samplers (Tom Glazer, Carly Wilcox, Benjy Bull) use the post-Weavers-Gateway Singers folkum method. This involves a lot of rowdy part-singing and such obvious devices as somebody shouting "Haw, haw!" when the lyrics say "When you told me to laugh, I done laugh." It would have been better to save the laughing for the campus type folknik hipster humor of ALL MY SINS ARE TAKEN AWAY ("Hand me down my iron truss") and TALKING BEATNIK BLUES. These things will bring no merriment to the listener. The sorriest thing on the LP is RAILROAD BILL. It has always been one of my favorites among guitar pieces but it is demolished with an Al Jolson rendition of "Mama, where -- where has Railroad Billy gone?"

The only significant thing about the album is the presence of Tom Glazer. An old pro, he has been recording folksongs since the days of Disc and Keynote. For the past several years most of his recording activity has been devoted to childrens records. It is unfortunate that he allied himself with this sort of group for his return to the broader field of folk music. Never a traditional singer, his city-billy style comes through warmly on PULL OFF YOUR OLD COAT and WHERE, OH WHERE. One wishes he had chosen to record a solo album with just his voice and guitar and

maybe a little of young Mr. Bull's banjo. (Guest Reviewer: Jay Smith, of Jacksonville, Florida.)

ROOSEVELT SYKES: THE HONEYDRIPPER (Prestige Bluesville 1014)

Another in Bluesville's series of albums by "rediscovered" blues singers. This one is in the same style as most of the rest -- a sort of idealized modern R&B which is cleaner and slicker in sound than the music recorded for Negro single-record audiences. A special play seems to have been made for the modern "soul" jazz taste. The dedicated R&B fan will miss some of the facets of the style which many people would call "crude", but which for him are an integral part of the music. Most of these facets boil down to what many would call a "dirty" sound. This record (like many another Bluesville) is so clean it becomes sterile in places.

Unnatural as this setting will seem to some listeners, it doesn't seem to bother Sykes too much in his grand, old-style shouting blues singing and his fine rolling piano. His singing is a bit like Joe Turner's, but with flowing blues phrasing instead of the somewhat agitated Basic-inspired rhythms shown by Turner.

Sykes' combo, as I have intimated, is a bit too clean for R&B. The drumming

reminds one of Dixieland in its annoyingly popping back beats, but is too sharp and clean for Dixie, let alone R&B. The organ isn't really necessary -- it seems to be a Bluesville fixture.

Sykes, however, is one of those extroverted blues men who could sound good with 101 strings, and his singing and playing make the faults of his accompaniment seem minor. One major fault on this disc that can and should be corrected: the B side is pressed off center, causing a very annoying unsteadiness of pitch. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

**EARL SCRUGGS: FOGGY MOUNTAIN BANJO**  
(Columbia 1564)

Here is the disc that could have been THE Bluegrass album for both folk and country fans -- an all-instrumental set featuring the world's greatest 3-finger banjo picker and a solid lineup of traditional tunes (HOME SWEET HOME, SALLY ANN, SALLY GOODIN, CRIPPLE CREEK, RUEBEN, JOHN HENRY, CUMBERLAND GAP, etc.). The fact that it is not is due, not to Earl, but to the musical gaucheries of The Foggy Mountain Boys, who back up Scruggs with some coll-ossally unimaginative accompaniments. Paul Warren's overly-strident fiddle too often exceeds the bounds of good taste -- and the decision to include "Uncle Josh"

and his wild dobro on every number rather than the conventional mandolin was a sorry one.

Earl, of course, has never been one to rest on his laurels -- and his picking has never been more inventively impeccable and rhythmically rock-like. It's regrettable he can't be heard with a group of individually creative sidemen like Reno's Tennessee Cut Ups, or The Stanley Brothers' men. Earl with the Foggys is too often like serving filet mignon smothered in salami. Folk fans who regard bluegrass as an amusing commercial modern outgrowth of traditional music will find FOGGY MOUNTAIN BANJO completely unpalatable. Country fans such as myself will be willing to take the bad with the good just to hear Earl pick. Both factions will miss the smooth country vocalizing of Lester Flatt. (Reviewer: Karen Glover)

**NEGRO FOLK RHYTHMS - Ella Jenkins and the Goodwill Spiritual Choir of Monumental Baptist Church (Chicago) (Folkways 2374)**

This album purports to be an educational survey of Negro folk rhythms. Judging by the music it contains, the Negro is rhythmically a very unproductive race. The whole second side (with the exception of one number done in an incredibly trite Tin Pan Alley pop style) sounds exactly like a recital of Negro Spirituals such as you can hear at any highschool choral



concert. The first side is a selection of hopelessly over-arranged and slickened performances which sound at their best like imitations of Odetta and at their worst are nauseatingly cute and completely phony. (I must say in justice that I liked one track, WADE IN THE WATER, because it is done in the style of the choral passages from PORGY AND BESS, and I like PORGY AND BESS.) The album includes the song OLD TIME RELIGION performed thrice: in "traditional, classic, and gospel" styles. Something like this would be helpful if only the performances were distinctly related to what they were supposed to be.

This album will undoubtedly find its way into many classrooms whose teachers genuinely want to teach their children something about Negro folk music, but who are repelled from the real thing (such as that on the *Lonax-Atlantic Anthology*) because "it sounds too much like rock & roll" or something like that. Far too many performances of Negro folk music by educated Negroes such as Miss Jenkins bow to this kind of taste. Or perhaps the motive is a purposeful attempt by educated Negroes to remove the white stereotype of Negro music as something "barbaric" and to show these whites that Negro music is noble and good, in the whites' own image. Whether this record is motivated by one of these purposes or whether it is a sincere attempt to make good music, it is a complete negation of the greatness of Negro music. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

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**RECORDS**

JOHN LEE HOOKER PLAYS AND SINGS THE BLUES  
(Chess 1454)

The recent "rediscovery" of John Lee seems to have sent record companies scurrying to their vaults to search for unissued Hooker material -- for here is still another LP consisting largely of titles originally released as singles by other labels, or alternate takes of previous Chess cuts. John Lee appears alone with his guitar here; and from the record quality and Hooker's guitar style I would judge these sides were cut circa 1948-49. This record and Hooker's previous Chess LP are the best examples of his most basic blues style -- the mood varying from driving and powerful (MAD MAN BLUES) to plaintive and lonely (I DON'T WANT YOUR MONEY). The one drawback of the album is that Studs Terkel's liner notes miss the point by an unnecessarily wide margin: "Consider .. these 12 blues a dozen chapters of a novel. Protagonists: Adam and Eve, or modern prototypes of our leafed ancestors. Subject: Unoriginal Sin." This is hardly the spirit in which Hooker conceives his music. (Reviewer: Dave Glover)

\* \* \* \* \*

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BROWNIE MCGHEE & SONNY TERRY: BLUES ALL  
AROUND MY HEAD (Prestige Bluesville 1020)

Another album (the third for Prestige) featuring the unique renditions of McGhee and Terry, probably the most often-recorded blues performers today. The music these two have been doing lately could best be described as traditional blues listenably adapted for college audiences. The purely musical (in an objective sense) are present in abundance -- McGhee probably knows more different blues chord patterns than any other traditional performer. Literary qualities, too -- the two have a real knack for new blues lyrics. What is missing is emotion and the vital quality of real blues that one might call (for lack of a better word) roughness. Given one of their potentially beautiful songs, they crank it out like a couple of well-oiled machines. The somewhat anti-septic setting one has come, regrettably, to associate with Bluesville doesn't help, either. This set is right in their college groove (read "rut"), and for this date their instrumentals were not the best they are capable of. Unless you like your blues well-scrubbed, you won't find this album too worthwhile.

Recently I had the pleasure of hearing Brownie and Sonny in Portland, Oregon. They gave a college concert which was

just plain dull. As usual, there were sessions in friends' homes, however, including one at the home of Mel Lyman (Portland banjo and harmonica player and singer in the finest old-timey style). In these informal sessions Sonny and Brownie proved without a doubt that they are still capable of first-class traditional blues. When they are relaxed and out of the bright spotlights they can communicate like few other artists. They seem to react, as a rule, to a recording studio just like they do to an auditorium -- they stiffen up emotionally, become less inventive in their playing, and just crank out the songs relying on their fine stage personalities for communication with the audience. It is imperative that somebody record Sonny and Brownie in a completely relaxed, informal setting (as Candid has recently done, with invaluable results, for Lightnin' Hopkins) while they still are capable of maximum emotional communication through the blues. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

THREE PRESTIGE INTERNATIONAL RELEASES

It is painful for a reviewer to begin a discussion of the latest releases of an integritous and well-intentioned recording company with the statement that there is no legitimate excuse for the existence of any one of these three albums. Not one of them documents anything of any impor-

tance in American folk music. All are highly boring and of negligible value as entertainment. Appealing to neither an educational nor commercial market, the Lord only knows who will want to buy them.

ODRAY RAMSEY SINGS JIMMIE RODGERS FAVORITES (Prestige 13009) seems to be trying to illustrate the fact that many of the popular compositions of Jimmie Rodgers are entering oral tradition and are on the way to becoming true folk songs. One would then expect to hear Ramsey, one of our better traditional singers, performing adaptations of the tunes in his distinct traditional vocal style -- as he has so excellently done with many Carter Family songs. Not so. What one does hear is Ramsey rather feebly imitating the Blue Yodeler's every nuance and doing some Pete Seeger-like blues noodling on the banjo. Ramsey's voice does resemble Rodgers', but his yodeling is painfully shaky and uncertain in pitch. The only point made by the record is that the irregularities of a good folksinging voice (and Ramsey's is VERY good), so charming and moving in presentation of traditional material, sound extremely weak in emulation of a pop singing style. There is only one Original Blue Yodeler, and his records have never disappeared from the catalogues. Why then should the public be expected to bother with an imitator?

THE CAT CAME BACK And Other Fun Songs (Prestige 13011) finds John Greenway

droning fun song after fun song in a small, dry, husky voice to a muffled, monotonous guitar accompaniment. Listening to him do it is anything but fun. Greenway is a genuinely witty person (at least in a LITERARY way -- see the liner notes to this album) and is aware of what these songs should sound like. But this album, which at its best would be only an amusing trifle, cries out for a solid entertainer (of the Ed McCurdy or Bob Gibson sort at the very least) to be effective. Dr. Greenway, though he sings intelligently, has not one whit of ability as a purely aural entertainer -- and his "fun" album is thus as much fun and as lively as the proverbial weekend in Philadelphia.

Pick Temple is a successful children's entertainer on TV, and after hearing his album PICK OF THE CROP (Prestige 13008) it is not difficult to visualize him grinning from the video tube and saying the equivalent of "Hi, kiddies, here's your old Uncle Pick and he's going to sing you some American Folk Songs! Won't that be fun?" Though adults, according to their taste, will think Temple ridiculous or be bored by him, children who enjoy Burl Ives or Alan Mills may go along with Pick's clear diction, pleasant-but-bland voice, and condescending cuteness -- especially on animal songs like OLD BLUE,

SOW TOOK THE MEASLES, and I HAD A BIRD. But the same devices used on songs like NAOMI WISE will insult even a child's intelligence. Temple is apparently under the delusion that folk songs consist merely of words and music, and that anyone who can carry a tune in a bucket and thumb a guitar can perform them. It just isn't so -- as his album so abundantly makes clear.

Kenneth Goldstein, the producer of these discs, would certainly agree in all fairness that the value of these records is, at best, extremely peripheral to a field in which the center is yet a gaping void. It is unjust and incomprehensible to place novelty items such as these on a record market that doesn't so much as contain a single Texas Gladden or Hobart Smith LP. What is wrong? What is the trouble? WHY DON'T WE GET DIRECTLY TO THE HEART OF THE MATTER ITSELF? We are in the final hours of an extremely crucial quarter-century of upheaval in the musical tradition of our country. Our localized, oral song tradition is yielding to the beginnings of an urban, nationwide, mass-communications one. 300 years of American rural tradition is dying undocumented at our feet, even as we sit here listening to our Pick Temple and Greenway records. In another decade, when our musical heri-

tage will be irrevocably lost, we will have a hundred years to record our Temples and their kin. Time is running out -- and culturally responsible recording companies should be answering the call to their duty. It is no more than right that first things must come first. Serving only dessert rather than the meat and potatoes is an unhealthy diet indeed. A culture that must live on it will sicken and die. Why is our astounding mass-communications industry being wasted? Why can't it (as Alan Lomax has stated so convincingly) be placed at the disposal of our eloquent and authentic -- but unheard -- folk themselves?

#### THE BILL BROONZY STORY (Verve MGV 3000)

Take this set, open it up, contemplate its five LP's and its \$25 price tag, feel its magnificent heft in your hands, and you will realize that, in 1961, the blues has arrived. This album is comparable to a Wagnerian opera in its sheer stupendousness. And we have been informed that this is only Volume One!

This album marks Broonzy's Last Sessions. The aim was very similar to that of the Leadbelly set made by Fred Ramsey and issued on four Folkways LP's about the same length of time after Leadbelly's death as this set is after Broonzy's. It was made (unlike Leadbelly's sessions) in a professional recording studio. The machines were turned on and Broonzy,

gently prodded by Bill Randle, Studs Terkel, and maybe others, gave out with a veritable oceanful of music and conversation. Several miles of the resulting tapes have been transferred to disc -- and we have THE BILL BROONZY STORY.

Contrary to the implications of the title, this is not arranged in any special way -- there is no attempt at chronology or at a methodical coverage of Big Bill's musical universe. Whether or not the tapes have been extensively edited (there are a few obvious splices) the general effect is of the natural flow of conversation and music at a leisurely pace. Playing this set on a good phonograph, you actually have Big Bill in the room with you, talking and singing as he might have in a perfectly informal, natural situation. Verve has dispensed with the usual echo chamber to further enhance the intimacy.

This set is not as great an addition to the Broonzy legacy as we might have hoped. On the other hand, there is no real reason to expect it to be. Broonzy made a great many recordings during his last few years of life, and he has recorded virtually every song in this album at least once before. The performances in this set are very similar to the earlier recordings. Again, there is no reason to suspect that they wouldn't be. Broonzy was not in the best of health when he made these tapes, but his musical power seems to have been unimpaired. His singing and playing show no deterioration when com-

pared with that in albums such as BIG BILL'S BLUES (Columbia).

The talk on the album is at least as valuable as is the music. Much of this ground, too, has been covered in the book BIG BILL'S BLUES, on Folkways recordings of interviews, and on BLUES IN THE MISSISSIPPI NIGHT (United Artists). He covers numerous subjects -- with music, musicians, and their women, specifically and generally, being the main field of specialization. Highlights of the conversation: the genealogy of rock & roll, with the categorical statement that "Elvis Presley sings blues" on side 1-B; reminiscences of the first blues Bill ever heard -- played by his uncle on a 5-string banjo, on the same side; how Bill creates a blues on side 2-B; the story of the actual live entertainer named C. C. Rider on the same side; reminiscences of old blues singers on sides 3-B and 4-A, ending with the story of how Leadbelly got his name; and a concert in New York City where everybody played JOHN HENRY, on side 5-A.

Altogether, this set represents a great accomplishment. There are a few minor bugs: for one, it would have been good if the talk had been transcribed as well as the lyrics of the songs, for reference; it would have been good if the individual notes supplied with each of the five records

had had something to do with the particular record they came with instead of being of a general nature; it would be nice to know the names of the interviewers (there are at least two of which only one can be Bill Randle, editor of the set). Otherwise, a fine job. This is certainly as worthwhile a purchase as any other five Broonzy LP's. It is a real blessing to have such a complete documentary of a man who, while he affected a very artificial style for sophisticated white audiences (largely Europeans) in his last years, was at one time the foremost traditional Negro singer going -- in record sales as well as in quality of performance -- and whose life ran for most of its length down the very center of blues tradition.

One more interesting thing to think about as one contemplates this album -- many of Broonzy's best records from his best days in the 30's were made for the Melotone label. The retail price of Melotone records was exactly one one-hundredth of the retail price of Verve's **THE BILL BROONZY STORY**. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

**VIVIEN RICHMAN SINGS FOLKSONGS "FOR YOU AND ME"** (Bobtone 2066)

Vivien Richman is a Pennsylvania folksinger whose repertoire, to judge from

this album, is a little too broad for her own good. For it is too much to expect that one folksinger could sing convincingly all the myriad of songs and styles that Miss Richman attempts here -- everything from Jewish lullabies to gospel songs, Southern Mountain hoedowns, Woody Guthrie, railroad blues, children's songs, folknik compositions, Texas songs, Josh White numbers, and Bob Schmertz originals (far and away the best number is Schmertz' delightful **QUEEN ANN FRONT**). The ultimate (and inevitable failure of this album is, of course, due to the great variety of cultures represented -- since Miss Richman cannot do justice to any one of them, she makes them all sound the same. Someone named J. E. Davidson doesn't help much on banjo, either, I must say. There is nothing on this album that is either musically bad or vulgarly commercialized-- it's just that there isn't anything here that would be of any interest to a fan of folk music. Followers of Miss Richman who wish to give it a try may obtain the record by writing to Bobtone Records at 615 Summerlea Ave., Pittsburgh 32, Penna. (Reviewer: M/Sgt. Wes Buck)

**LITTLE BROTHER MONTGOMERY: BLUES** (Folkways 3527)

'There's a right way to play music -- and there's a wrong way. You can't just play the way you feel ... You have to know and study the tradition ... The music

has to come from within, yes, but you have to play it right."

This articulate statement of blues musicology comes from the lips of Little Brother Montgomery as quoted by Rudi Blesh in the notes accompanying this LP. Montgomery makes the point not only verbally, but musically as well -- drop the needle into practically any cut and you're back to the blues piano of the thirties -- without surface scratch.

Little Brother plays an easy, almost laconic, piano -- an understated style rather than a pounding one; blues for three o'clock in the morning. Top piano solos: VICKSBURG 44 and L & N BOOGIE. Montgomery's singing, in the smooth manner of Lonnie Johnson, is best on PALLET ON THE FLOOR and STORYVILLE BLUES.

Montgomery works alone on this disc -- erasing the blandness of his recent outing on Prestige (where he submitted to jazz guitar and bass backing). It is top city-piano blues. The notes include a discography from 1929 to the present. (Reviewer: Dave Glover)

### PETE'S LATEST RELEASES.....

In the short space of two months (since LSR #12), Pete has issued three records and is already working on a fourth for general release soon. Of the three albums discussed here, CHAMPLAIN VALLEY SONGS (Folkways 5210)

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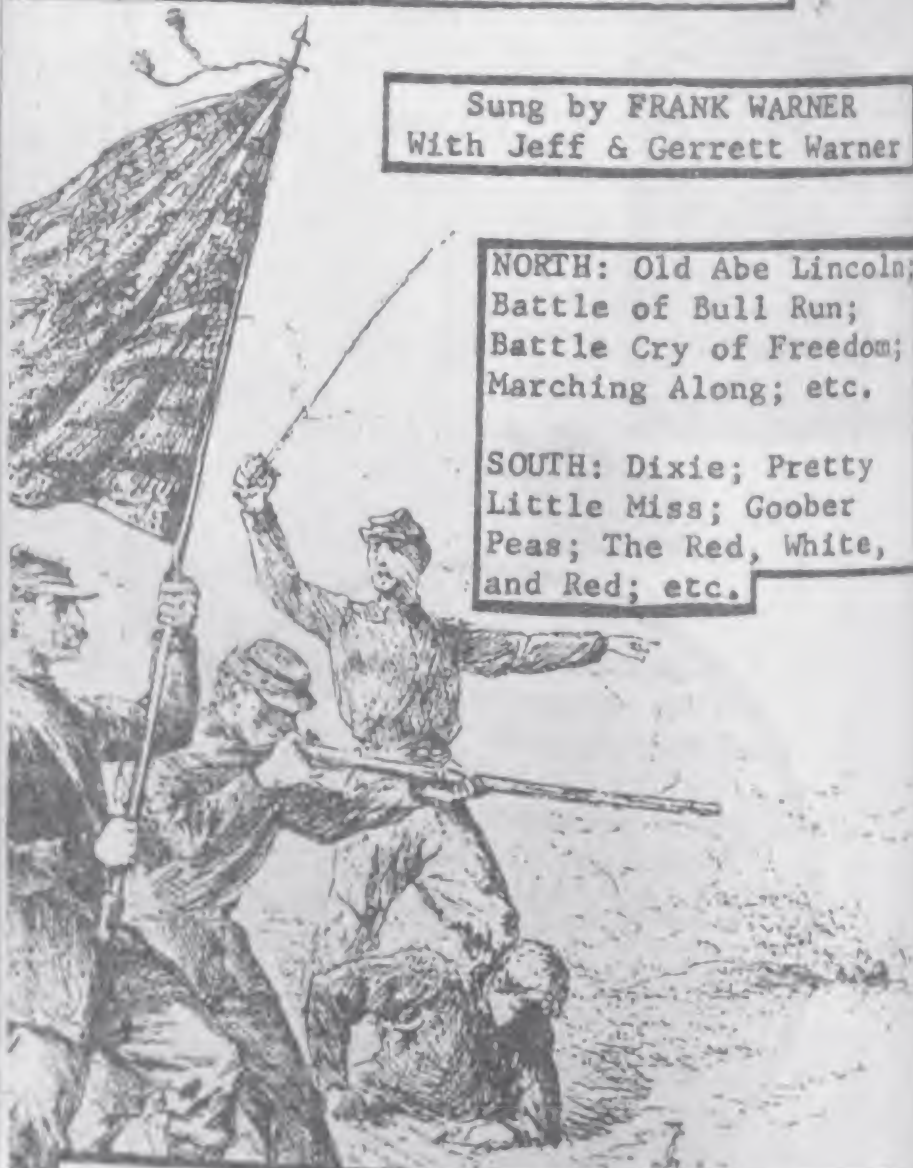
PR-INT 13012

## SONGS OF THE CIVIL WAR, NORTH & SOUTH

Sung by FRANK WARNER  
With Jeff & Gerrett Warner

NORTH: Old Abe Lincoln;  
Battle of Bull Run;  
Battle Cry of Freedom;  
Marching Along; etc.

SOUTH: Dixie; Pretty  
Little Miss; Goober  
Peas; The Red, White,  
and Red; etc.



Civil War experts consider this the best album of songs of The Civil War ever made.

is by far the best bet for all but the hardy beginner. The novice may prefer volume four of the seemingly endless AMERICAN FAVORITE BALLADS (Folkways 2323) set, while the avant-garde, politically minded will undoubtedly want SONGS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR (Folkways 5436). Others may prefer to wait for the fourth, SING OUT WITH PETE! (Folkways 2455), an audience participation record on the order of VOICES TOGETHER and PETE AND SONNY AT CARNEGIE HALL, and, unfortunately, containing many of the same songs. Many will want all four.

Those of us who have followed Pete's recording career closely and have his each and every album (all forty-plus) are bound to think that CHAMPLAIN VALLEY SONGS (from the Marjorie L. Porter Collection of North Country Folklore in upper New York State) is one of the best things he has done in years. To put it rather over-dramatically, he has returned here to straight folk material (at least, folk-COLLECTED material), and it is indeed pleasant to note how well he sings these songs. A few years ago, Stinson issued a record by Milt Okun called ADIRONDACK FOLK SONGS AND BALLADS (Stinson 82) which covered somewhat the same ground as this one. It was, however, a rather shallow effort and did little justice to the fine songs of New York State. As Kenneth S. Goldstein states in his notes, this Adirondack region still retains much of its "wilderness flavor" and curious mixture of Scotch-

Irish-English-French-Indian culture -- here is a "folk treasure." The average folk fan will be quite surprised to hear Pete sing in both French and Indian dialects on this record. He will also be surprised that JOHN RILEY is probably the only song on the album that he has previously heard. He should also be mighty pleased to hear Pete sing through such a treasure-trove of new folk material in such fine fashion. There are Indian songs (SENECA CANOE SONG), French-Canadian songs (ISABEAU S'Y PROM-ENEAU, UN CANADIEN ERRANT, LES RAFTSMEN, VIVA LA CANADIENNE), English-American ballads (JOHN RILEY, ELDER BORDEE, THE VALIANT SOLDIER), composed songs (BANKS OF CHAMPLAIN, LILY OF THE LAKE, YOUNG CHARLOTTE), music hall songs (HOW'RE YOU FIXED FOR STAMPS TODAY?, CLARA NOLAN'S BALL), lumberjack songs (ONCE MORE A-LUMBERING GO, THE SHANTYMAN'S LIFE), and a pair of British pipe tunes played on the recorder (chalail?). It is my feeling that Pete should do albums of this sort a lot more often. There is ample evidence here that, when he sings folk material he is truly interested in (Pete himself lives in rural New York State), he is one of the best in the business.

Volume Four of the AMERICAN BALLADS series finds Pete singing folk material (some of it questionable) that he does not always seem to be interested in. At least the emphasis here, as in the entire series, is on singing all the old chest-

nuts -- BOLL WEEVIL, FROGGY WENT A-COURTING, GO DOWN MOSES, 'ERIE CANAL, etc. -- in sort of a jazzy, catchy, easy-to-listen-to style that will appeal to almost everybody. It's nice, sure, but hardly very inspiring or worthwhile. Besides that, at least six of the songs are in the YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE category that so marred Volume Three of this series. JOHNNY HAS GONE FOR A SOLDIER stands head-and-shoulders over the rest of the songs in this album, but even it, nicely done as it is, is scarce excuse to add this one to your collection.

SONGS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR is a true puzzler to this reviewer. For with one exception, it is exactly the same album as SONGS OF THE LINCOLN AND INTERNATIONAL BRIGADES (Stinson 52). That one exception is JARMA VALLEY (on the LINCOLN BRIGADE half of the disc, sung by Seeger and chorus), sung here by Tom Glazer, and sung on Stinson by Woody Guthrie. Otherwise, all the cuts (including the flip side's SIX SONGS FOR DEMOCRACY sung by Ernest Busch and chorus) are identical on both discs. This record is made up of two 78rpm albums originally released on Asch and Keynote in 1940. There is an excellent set of notes by Alvah Bessie and several fine pictures of the Lincoln Brigade in combat, plus the original notes of the Asch and Keynote albums as well. The music -- all

on the order of VIVA LA QUINCE BRIGADA -- is most enjoyable and the performers are good. The Ernest Busch side was, according to the notes, actually recorded in Spain during a 1938 air raid. All fine and dandy, to be sure. But why release an album that is already in another company's catalog and is readily available to the public at \$3.98 while this one costs \$5.95?

#### FOLKSONGS OF THE LOUISIANA ACADIANS (Louisiana Folklore Society LFS-A-4)

Hats off to Harry Oster for another terrific album! This record is a comprehensive survey of one of America's greatest and least-known folksong cultures. The Acadians are the French-speaking people who were evicted from their homes in British Nova Scotia in the 1700's and subsequently founded a community in French Louisiana which has persisted strongly to this day. Until quite recently the "Cajuns" were completely French in language and customs. Now American ways, and American country music, has made large inroads in their culture, but there is still a brimming recordful of traditional music -- all in French and much of it dating back to France before the revolution. Dr. Harry Oster has gone to the heart of

Cajun country, Grand Mamou, Louisiana ("Big Mamou") with his tape recorder, and has come out with what is fabulous folk music in any language.

One side of the disc consists of the old songs which originated before 1800, mostly in France. This side is dominated by Bee Deshotels, a rice farmer and horse trainer who is one of the most entertaining amateur folksingers I've ever heard, and a respectable guitar player. He does a couple of randonees (cumulative songs) for the appreciation of which a knowledge of French is quite unnecessary. Also in his repertoire is a wonderful song about Grand Mamou's Mardi Gras. His real gem, however, is a love lament, IN NACHITOCIES, a localized variant of an old French song which he sings unaccompanied. It deserves to be one of the standards of the general folk repertoire. The flip side of the disc contains music of more modern creation, with influences from outside sources which Oster describes -- but still unmistakably Cajun in its inimitable swagger and exuberance. The singing again requires no knowledge of the language to communicate, but enjoyment is vastly increased by the fat booklet prepared by Dr. Oster and his staff, with complete texts in French and English and scholarly notes on all aspects of the music. Folkways Anthology owners will note performances of SAUTE CRAPEAU and LE VIEUX BULARD ET SA FEMME on this set which are at

least the equal of the ones in the Anthology. The infectious sounds of a Cajun "fais-to-do" permeate the whole set. A testimony to the excellence of this set which probably means more than nine was given to me by a friend who grew up in Louisiana. When I played the record for him he exclaimed that this was truly realistic; that this was the way the Cajuns he knew actually sounded.

I can't imagine a better one-record ethnic survey. By studying French music and what has happened to it in America we can gain a better perspective on the development of English music here -- which we so often take for granted. And in the process we can listen to one of the most entertaining discs ever made -- with great singing and fine performances on fiddle, guitar, accordion, and harmonica. Order this record immediately from Dr. Oster (3323 Morning Glory, Baton Rouge 8, La.; \$6.30 post-paid)-- and have it sent by air mail!  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

Postscript: A nostalgic note on the above mentioned 1920's recordings of Cajun music is contained in this clipping from the New York Times, Dec. 23, 1929, p. 25.  
Contributed by Joe Drochetz.

#### CAJUN FOLKSONGS RECORDED

No longer will the extemporaneous folk songs of the Cajuns of Louisiana's bayous and lush countryside be confined in audience to the inhabitants of the state's southern part. All the world will soon

be able to hear and enjoy the simple, sometimes plaintive, sometimes gay, music produced by such homely instruments as guitars, accordians, and harmonicas. Inspired by the large sale of two trial records, the Victor company sent an expedition to make a large group of records of the foremost artists of the Cajun country, says the Bureau of New Orleans News, supported by civic groups. From Point Clare and Point Durald, from Chataigner and Calcasieu, they came to New Orleans where, timidly at first but later with confidence, they braved the stern and somewhat mysterious appearance of the recording microphone. Their songs are prompted by their feelings, love, hunger, sadness, and find expression in simple music, sixteen bars being the extent of the variation. They are called "fait-to-do," which, being freely translated, means "to make sleep." The 24 double-disk records that have been made will be released within a few months, Victor representatives reported.

RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT SINGS SONGS BY  
WOODY GUTHRIE AND JIMMIE RODGERS  
(English Columbia 33 SX 1291)

Devotees of "Ramblin' Jack Elliott" (as he is persistently called here) well

know what usually happens when English Columbia gets ahold of him for an album. A bunch of British sidemen are hired who sound as if they have never heard of American folk music before, let alone played it, and they make a lot of racket with the standard commercial country music cliches while Jack tries to sing the songs in such a way so as not to offend either the folk buyer or the country record fan. The results are rather like the well-known definition of "mixed emotions:" you feel like your mother-in-law just drove over a cliff with your new Ferrari. Such is the case with this record. Surprisingly, the Rodgers side is the best, with Jack singing through six of Jimmie's best railroad and jailhouse songs in nifty, free-wheeling fashion, aided occasionally by clarinet and trumpet. (It must be remembered that Rodgers himself used backing far cornier than that heard on this album). Jack stays pretty close to the feeling of the originals -- especially so on WHIPPIN' THE OLD T. B., where the treatment borders deliciously close to imitation without crossing over, and the clarinet and trumpet cooperate beautifully. The Guthrie side, alas, is not so hot. It should have been the core of the album, but instead Jack's style is altered to one bordering on straight

country-western singing -- much too fast and far different in expression than the usual fine mode of Elliott singing Guthrie songs (see any of Jack's Topic recordings for examples of the latter). Even so, Jack gives us one dandy, I AIN'T GOT NO HOME IN THIS WORLD ANYMORE, which is done reasonably straight. Other songs are DO RE MI, DEAD OR ALIVE, GRAND COULEE DAM, DUST STORM DISASTER, and SO LONG IT'S BEEN GOOD TO KNOW YOU, and, even in their hybrid treatments there are enough flashes of Woody to make them extremely entertaining, if not ethnic, experiences. For no matter how far Jack goes astray, he is still the best purveyor of Woody Guthrie's songs that we have. He goes to the heart of the matter, and when he's in top form one gets the feeling that he and Woody sing from exactly the same place.

Elliott fans may expect in the near future an album of Guthrie songs sung by Jack on Prestige (P-I 13016) which we believe could be his best. Collector records of England have also issued an EP (Collector jea 5) by Jack. Both albums will be reviewed in future LSR's.

#### ROOSTER BLUES (Excelllo 8000)

Lightning Slim is probably one of the best exponents of the funky, down-home kind of blues currently being heard in Southern saloons and jazz joints. He

and his group, though electrified (mainly so that they can be heard above the noise of the hard drinking, hard living patrons), provide a gutty, moving sound that is for the most part rooted in the country tradition. The instrumental combinations employed tend to be paradoxical: on a few cuts you'll hear electric guitar and electric harmonica backed by washboard and bones.

Slim's style treads a narrow line too countrified for the disc jockey trade and too raw and open for folk blues fans -- but highly communicative.

The titles heard here were originally regionally distributed singles: HOO-DOO BLUES, with Slim giving black magic as the reason for his woman troubles; IT'S MIGHTY CRAZY, a double-entendre blues that sounds like it owes a lot to a Sonny Boy Williamson tune; and FEELING AWFUL BLUE, delivered by Slim in characteristically rough, emotional fashion. Slim's blues can be seen to be concerned with his most immediate problems.

Sophisticated (but less so than Muddy Waters) yet sensitive, Slim is recommended to the devout blues buff. (Reviewer: Dave Glover)

THE FAMOUS CARTER FAMILY (Harmony 7280)  
THE GREAT BILL MONROE (Harmony 7290)  
THE STANLEY BROTHERS (Harmony 7291)

Although the selections of titles on these re-releases of Columbia 78rpm

classics indicate, they are intended for the country market; folk fans who enjoy old-time and Bluegrass music will certainly want to pick up all three albums. At \$1.98 apiece one can obtain a triple helping of good music for the price of many single LP's on the market.

The Stanley Brothers disc dates from their 1949-50 days at Columbia. Although PRETTY POLLY is the only genuine folk title on the record (A VISION OF MOTHER, SWEETEST LOVE, GATHERING FLOWERS FOR THE MASTER'S DOUQUET, etc.), city fans will be intrigued by A LIFE OF SORROW, an earlier version of the song MAN OF CONSTANT SORROW that is the best number in the Stanleys' current repertoire.

Many of the Monroe titles, dating from the immediate post-war period which saw the birth of modern Bluegrass music, are classics of their type -- ROCKY ROAD BLUES, FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW, BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY, etc. It is difficult to tell by ear alone (and no information is given on the record jacket), but Monroe's sidemen here are presumably Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and Chubby Wise. Monroe himself is the most thrilling vocalist in the history of commercial country music, and although his singing here is not so excitingly leather-lunged as on his recent Decca outings, it is still awe-inspiring.

Of most interest to city folk fans will be the Carter disc -- the only recordings of the original Carters (outside of the dubs on the Folkways Anthology) available in this country. Though the titles selected for this LP are from the gospel-sentimental side of the Carter repertoire rather than from their folk material (WAVES ON THE SEA, JOHN HARDY, etc.), a new generation of fans can now hear for the first time the incomparable Carter renditions of LULU WALLS, WILDWOOD FLOWER, WORRIED MAN BLUES, LONESOME VALLEY, and the Carter theme song and all-time best seller KEEP ON THE SUNNYSIDE.

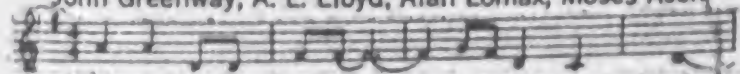
It must be regretfully said, however, that these sides do not represent the Carters at their best. All the songs on this LP were recorded in 1935 -- quite near the end of the Carters' trail of 300-odd record titles. It is evident that the innumerable recording sessions, whistlestop tours, and radio shows plus the internal strife that was soon to break up the Family had by 1935 taken their toll. Sara's voice had by now deepened and coarsened -- and she here is no longer the young girl who sang so wild and free on the early Victor classics. The accompaniment, while still distinctly Carter, is tired and heavy compared to the earlier.

Columbia records is to be commended for keeping this material available to modern

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Watch Yourself; Mean Old Frisco; Come  
Back Baby; Thinkin' 'Bout an Old  
Friend; The Walking Blues; Back to New  
Orleans; Katie Mae; etc.

BVLP 1023 K.C.'s BLUES sung by K.C.  
Douglas: Broken Heart; Penthouse Blues;  
Wake up Workin' Woman; Rootin' Ground-  
hog; Doctor Blues; Meanest Woman;  
Watchdog Blues; etc.

BVLP 1026 FREE AGAIN sung by Robert  
Pete Williams: Free Again; Almost Dead  
Blues; Rolling Stone; A Thousand Miles  
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Black Label 15000 series! Of such stuff  
are this writer's dreams made on!

THE SMOTHERS BROTHERS AT THE PURPLE  
ONION (Mercury 20611)

Mercury, the only record company I  
can think of that had hitherto refrained  
from putting out an imitation Kingston  
Trio record, has now gone the way of the  
wicked and plucked The Smothers Brothers,  
Tommy and Dickie, from the somewhat  
shaky hands of Jack Paar. Television  
fans are, I understand, supposedly in  
rapture over the antics and babblings  
of the Brothers S, and, if this is the  
case, this LP will stand as monumental  
proof that most people who watch TV are  
pretty far out of it anyway. The album  
notes claim these boys are satirists,  
but that is just a lot of hot air.  
They're just another bad folk group  
(very much akin to Bud and Travis) that  
combines the worst in folk music with  
the worst in humor (add a dash of  
commercial Youth) to produce bad records  
-- such as this one. Not folk and not  
funny, THE BROTHERS S AT THE PURPLE

ONION will have to be sold to the TV-watchers. I'm afraid they are the only ones who will appreciate it. (Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

## BOOK REVIEWS . . . . .

AMERICAN FOLK TALES AND SONGS, Compiled by Richard Chase (Signet Key paperback 75¢)

This book, originally published in 1956, is now in its second printing and is one of the best buys in the whole field of folk lore publications. In it, Richard Chase has distilled the experience of forty years of collecting the traditional tales and songs; and living among the people of the Southern Mountains. Although this is a regional collection, these tales and songs are the common heritage of all those who speak the English language. The great value of this book is that it presents folk lore as a whole -- ancient (grandfather) tales, riddles, tall tales, ballads, songs, hymns, play parties, and fiddle tunes. All of these existed together in the folk community.

Some of the best tales in our tradition are here: WICKED JOHN AND THE DEVIL, RUSH CAPE (a mountain version of the King Lear legend), PACK DOWN THE BIG CHEST, JACK AND THE RICH OLD MAN, THE SNAKEBIT HOEHANDLE. Now these tales are not just to be read, but learned and TOLD -- and almost anyone can do this with a little application.

Among the ballads are: THE MERRY GOLDEN TREE and NICKETY NACKETY (Wife Wrapt in a Wether Skin) which Chase learned from Horton Barker. Here is also the DEVIL'S NINE QUESTIONS (Child #1), collected many years ago by Chase and popularized by Burl Ives. Among the songs: an excellent version of THE DEAF WOMAN'S COURTSHIP to the tune of MAGGIE LAUDER; and THE MILLER'S WILL which Richard Chase taught to Horton Barker who sang it so magnificently at the University of Chicago Folk Festival.

At the back of this book is an amateur collector's guide which should be studied by all interested in the problems of collecting. However, one of the best parts of the book is the introduction, which should be read and re-read. It throws most of the folknik verbiage we have read and heard in recent years into the deep shade. Here is one short paragraph as an example:

"If this current folk movement is to become the basis for a living, creative use of art in the United States, it will spread best, perhaps only, through the living word, the human touch. There can be no commercialization, no standardization, no mechanization of these things. They elude every sort of modern sophistication. They are always shy."

This book is not another paperback

potboiler, but the result of experience, deep reflection and love. It can do much to guide those people who would like to bring the creative use of our folk heritage into their lives. (Reviewer: George Armstrong, Jr., Wilmette, Ill.)

Editors' Note: A good cross-section of the contents of the book discussed by Mr. Armstrong can be heard on the book's companion recording, AMERICAN FOLK TALES AND SONGS (Tradition 1011). Mr. Chase himself tells, with the true skill of the born raconteur, a number of the shorter jokes and tales of his book -- although space limitations precluded recording any of his wonderful "Jack" tales. The songs are sung singly and in duet by Paul Clayton and Jean Ritchie, and include: DEAF WOMAN'S COURTSHIP, DEVIL'S NINE QUESTIONS, THE GAMBLING SUITOR (sometimes called COURTING CASE), and WONDERFUL LOVE. This last number, sung solo by Jean, is the finest musical selection heard on the disc. The duets with Clayton tend to bog Jean down somewhat, due to Paul's non-committal style, but on the whole, the performances of the songs give a good deal of meaning to Chase's textual background as presented in the Signet book. And Chase's own presentation of the tales, of course, is beyond improvement. They must be heard to be fully enjoyed.

## ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER

Laurel River Valley Boys: DANCE ALL NIGHT WITH A BOTTLE IN YOUR HAND (Riverside) No. Carolina fiddle-banjo-guitar old-timey music.

ROLF CAHN & ERIC VON SCHMIDT (Folkways 2417) City singers doing blues.

Bob Gibson has a new album upcoming on Elektra.

The Carter Family: KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE (Acme LP 2) A. P., Sara, & children sing GOLD WATCH & CHAIN, SHIP AHOY, PRETTY RAIN DROPS, BEAUTIFUL ISLE OER THE SEA, etc.

THE VERSATILE BURL IVES (Decca)

T-Bone Walker: I GET SO WEARY (Imperial 9146) Part of Imperial's new series of Negro blues and spirituals recordings.

Lil' Son Jackson: ROCKIN' & ROLLIN' (Imperial 1942)

Ben & Adam: THE DUDAIM (Elektra) Israeli.

Shep Ginades: DOGWOOD SOUP (Pathways of Sound 1023) Children's songs.

Norman Rose, Cisco Houston, Art Malvin: ON THE RANCH (RCA-Victor LY 1033) Cowboy life in song and story. \$2.49 kids disc.

The Belafonte Folksingers: AT HOME AND ABROAD (RCA-Victor 2309)

The Browns: OUR FAVORITE FOLK SONGS (RCA-Victor 2333) Country pop group.

Bill & Gene Bonyun: SONGS OF YANKEE WHALING (Heirloom AHL-1)

JEREMY'S FRIENDS (Warwick 2019)

Milt Okun: AMERICA'S BEST LOVED FOLK SONGS (Warwick 2011) Re-issue of Okun's earlier Baton LP of the same title.

Jimmie Rodgers: JIMMIE THE KID (RCA-Victor)

The Wilcox Three: THE GREATEST FOLK SONGS EVER SUNG (Camden 669) Hardly. \$1.98.

Big Bill Miller: REVELATIONS AND THE BLUES (Columbia)

5-STRING BANJO JAMBOREE SPECTACULAR (Starday136) A 2-LP set featuring Bill Clifton, Stanley Brothers, Jim Eanes, Stringbean, Country Gentlemen, others. \$5.98.

EVOLUTION OF THE BLUES SONG (Columbia) Narrated by Jon Hendricks and featuring Big Miller, Jimmy Witherspoon, others.

Jesse Fuller has a new one on Good Time Jazz.

Dolan Ellis: ALMOST AUTHENTIC FOLK SONGS. (Commentary 03) 20th-Century "folk" humor.

Sonny & Brownie: BLUES IS MY COMPANION (Verve 3008) Routine effort.

J. B. King, Jr.: CAJUN HUMOR OF THE BAYOU (Montel 101) We haven't been able to locate a copy. Readers?

Katie Bell Nubin: SOUL, SOUL SEARCHING (Verve 3004) Spirituals with Diz Gillespie.

Gary Davis, Pink Anderson: GOSPEL, BLUES, AND STREET SONGS (Riverside 148) Re-issue of out-of-print RLP 12-611. A must.

Bill Monroe: MR. BLUEGRASS (Decca 4080)

Tony Mottola: FOLK SONGS (Command 823) The "folk songs in percussion" bit.

The Brothers Four: ROAMIN' (Columbia 8425) Awful, just awful.

ON CAMPUS WITH THE DEAXVILLE TRIO (Jubilee 1121) Fulfills a real need.

Billy Edd: U. S. A. (Monitor 354)

Memphis Slim and Wee Willie Dixon: THE BLUES EVERY WHICH WAY (Verve 3007) Verve's new blues series.

Pete Seeger and The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem will soon have albums on the Columbia label.

Kenneth S. Goldstein has undertaken the supervision of the Prestige Bluesville record line. Working with Ken will be blues collector-editor Sam Charters. Watch for future albums by Gary Davis, Furry Lewis, Pink Anderson, Tampa Red, K. C. Douglas, and Sidney Maiden.

Harry Oster's Folk-Lyric label has released an album of Ewan MacColl and his mother, Mrs. Betsy Miller, singing their Scots family songs. Sounds beautiful! Also an LP of primitive Louisiana piano playing.

The 3-volume Texas trilogy, A TREASURY OF FIELD RECORDINGS (77 Records), produced in England by Doug Dobell, will be released in the United States by Candid Records.

#### ENGLISH RECORDS

BLUES FROM MAXWELL STREET (Heritage 1004) With Blind Arvella Gray, James Brewer, King David, Daddy Stovepipe. Chicago blues.

\*\*\*\*\*

McDonald's Radio, 2227 East 35th Street, Minneapolis, now handles Arhoolie and Folk-Lyric Records. Stop in and hear these hard-to-find items. You are also invited to browse through McDonald's large stock of vintage jazz and blues 78rpm records.

"BOUND FOR GLORY" is at your bookstore! Ask for Dolphin Book # C248. Only 95¢!

(Continued from inside front cover)

...Reader Jay Smith of Jacksonville informs us that the Kingston Trio is finally contributing something worthwhile to American folk music. They are disbanding. We gleefully add that the Cumberland Three are also breaking up. Is a new trend beginning? ... Guy Carawan and his bride (nee Candy Anderson) are conducting lectures on the Sit-In movement, in addition to Guy's concerts. Write Guy's manager, Paul Endicott, 30532 Sheridan Street, Garden City, Mich., for booking information ... The April issue of McCall's magazine contains an article entitled "Country Music, Nashville Style" ... Woody Guthrie's autobiographical novel, BOUND FOR GLORY, is no longer a legend but a readily available paperback re-print. Ask for Dolphin Book #C248. Price is a mere 95¢ ... Minneapolis' most distinguished creator of stringed instruments, Roger Baldwin, announces that his order book for the summer is nearly filled. Order your custom-made long banjo neck now! Roger's address is 511 15th Ave. SE, Mpls. 14 ... Bob Koester of Del-Mar Records writes that Big Joe Williams has signed with him -- and that 50% of Del-Mar's future output will be in its "Roots of Jazz" series ... The Twin Cities' sickest folknik recently asked us if we had heard the new recording of George Lincoln Rockwell singing WE SHALL OVERCOME ... The Clancy Brothers and Tom Makem made a big hit this last week at

a posh Mpls night club -- winning over an audience that had come mainly to see the star act, Shelley Berman. Yes, there was the usual yuck in the crowd who hollered, "Sing THE SAME OLD SHILLELAGH!" ... The Minnesota Folk Song Society got off to an enthusiastic start with a Hootenanny that featured local talent. It was encouraging to see a 3 1/2 hour program that contained no youngsters performing commercial folkum. The acts were about equally divided among Bluegrass, Blues, and Old-Timey Hillbilly performers ... THE MINNESOTA CO-OP JR. book store now has the widest selection of folk LP's in Minneapolis, including a huge stock of Folkways albums discounted to 4.98. LSRs are available on the magazine rack -- and record stock is selected on the advice of LSR ... Wedgely Todd made a triumphant return to town last week -- capped off by a typically wild and witty Todd concert in the basement of McCosh's Bookstore. Todd brought along his new partner, guitar-picking "Jabbo" Kronstad, a drifting balladeer Wedgely met in Tijuana. After a few days of madcap party-going, it's off to Chicago and a booking at Erwin Cling's club, HILL-BILLY PARADISE, for Todd and Jab ... Upcoming reviews in LSR include the 2-volume Newport Folk Festival set on Folkways; the A. P. Carter memorial album on Acme; and albums by Frank Warner, Ronnie Gilbert, Sam Hinton, Robert Pete Williams, Jeannie Robertson, Jesse Fuller, Mills & Carignan, and many others. Plus letters, news, jokes, and a plea for subscriptions (which you were mercifully spared this issue)

(CISCO cont. from page 7)

puts a sparkle in the eye of the listener. He has rarely been so effective.

In his excellent liner notes, Cisco states with heartfelt sincerity that this is his "personal tribute" to the friend he knew so well -- Woody Guthrie. From the first song to the last, it is doubtful if Woody ever had such a magnificent tribute. The fact that Gilbert "Cisco" Houston died of cancer on April 28, 1961, at the age of 42, only six months after completing this album (and the fact that Woody suffers from the incurably fatal Huntington's Chorea) will undoubtedly add tremendous sentimental and emotional overtones to the performances here. That is as it should -- and must -- be, for Cisco knew death was close at hand and faced it with all the courage with which Woody faces his situation today. The purely analytical who care not a hoot about this can still enjoy the record as the best music Cisco has made in a long time. Those of us who know the story of Cisco and Woody may find it awfully hard, if not impossible, to subdue a great big lump in the throat and a certain wetness in the eyes as Cisco sings the last song, I'M BLOWING DOWN THAT OLD DUSTY ROAD, in this, his last record album. A great folk voice has been stilled. His kind will not be seen again for a long, long time.

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

PETE AND MIKE SEEGER: INDIAN SUMMER  
(Folkways 3851)

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS, Volume  
Three (Folkways 2398)

JEAN RITCHIE: CHILD BALLADS IN  
AMERICA, Volumes I-II.  
(Folkways 2301, 2302)

PEGGY SEEGER: AMERICAN FOLKSONGS  
FOR BANJO (Folk-Lyric 114)

OLD TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S  
(Folkways 2355)

EWAN MacCOLL: POPULAR SCOTTISH SONGS  
(Folkways 8757)

THE BEST OF EWAN MacCOLL (Prestige 13004)  
THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS  
(CHILD BALLADS) (Folkways 3509)

A TREASURY OF FIELD RECORDINGS, Volume  
One ("77" Records 77LA12-2) English.

RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT: KID STUFF  
(English Columbia seg 8046) An EP.

FOLK MUSIC FROM WISCONSIN  
(Library of Congress AAFSL 55)  
SONGS OF THE MICHIGAN LUMBERJACKS  
(Library of Congress AAFSL 56)

THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL  
(Vanguard 9083, 9084) A 2-LP set.



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**POETRY ROOM**  
**THE LITTLE SANDY**  
**REVIEW**

On our cover this month is Peggy Seeger subject of the following kind words: "the most inventive and consummate young musician to emerge from the Folk Boom," "one of the two or three valid modern stylists," and "our closest approximation to a Compleat City Folksinger." Peggy's had a varied recording career, appearing as soloist, accompanist, and group singer. She can be heard on Folkways, Riverside, Vanguard, Elektra, Folk-Lyric, Prestige, Tradition, Topic, Nixa, HMV, and Wattle. Cover drawing is by Jon Pankake.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

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*By Paul Nelson & Jon Pankake*

First off, we must beg your forgiveness for charging you the price of a double issue this month. We just had so many records to get in that page limits and production costs were thrown to the winds, and our budget for a single issue just couldn't stand the strain. We hope you'll forgive us. It won't happen again, folks ... As a special big double issue bonus, we proudly offer George Armstrong's fine suitable-for-framing, two-color drawing of everybody's folk favorites on pages 36-37 of this issue absolutely free ... See you again next month. Be sure to subscribe.

\* \* \* RECORD REVIEWS \* \* \*

## PEGGY SEEGER AND EWAN MacCOLL: TWO-WAY TRIP (Folkways 8755)

But for the curious nature of this LP, it would hardly be necessary to expound at length on the genius of two of the world's greatest professional folksingers, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger. One could simply tuck it in between CLASSIC SCOTS BALLADS (Tradition 1015) and THE NEW BRITON GAZETTE (Folkways 8732) and spend many delightful hours listening to it. But TWO-WAY TRIP is something quite different for Ewan and Peggy -- it is a sort of you-sing-my-song-and-I'll-sing-yours type of album. Their only previous attempt at this kind of exchange is the now-unavailable MATCHING SONGS OF THE BRITISH ISLES AND AMERICA (Riverside 12-637) -- an experiment in comparing variants of well-known songs from both sides of the Atlantic.

While it was stated in a SING OUT! article on MacColl that Ewan himself "never sings an American song," this new disc finds him not only joining in the choruses of Peggy's American numbers, but singing lead on the American THE DEVIL'S NINE QUESTIONS. This is highly irregular for MacColl, and leads to the inevitable question: how does he fare? Quite well, really. While it is true that he never sounded so Scottish as when he tries to sound American, his



superb voice and tremendous musical ability carry him through most numbers without embarrassment. This is not so, however, on THE DEVIL'S NINE QUESTIONS (MacColl, in the excellent set of notes for this album, admits an early passion for "that most superb of all folksong stylists, Mrs. Texas Gladden."). Peggy's accompaniment and Ewan's singing make that song a mistake that does not even hint at the glories of the original. The rest of the album contains some fine music.

Peggy's MATTY GROVES, sung with autoharp, stands out as one of her best numbers on any LP; and the duet-singing on THE TWO BROTHERS and WALY WALY is so aesthetically and musically beautiful that this album should be of much interest to both music and voice students as well as folk fans everywhere. It is hard to imagine a richer musical experience than Ewan and Peggy's two-part singing on WALY WALY. Ewan and Peggy also sing the delicate RICHIE STORY, learned from MacColl's mother; and Peggy demonstrates a much-improved use of Scottish accent in her singing of MacColl's songs. Ewan sings lead on THE CRAFTY FARMER, THE BARRING OF THE DOOR, JENNY NETTLES, and TULLOCHGORUM in his usual fine fashion. Peggy sings and plays a beautiful JUST AS THE TIME WAS FLOWING, but is less successful with JACKERO. THE CARRION CROW is well-sung by both singers; and THE BARTLEY EXPLOSION (from Korson with a melody composed by Peggy) is quite an aural treat for those

who want to hear Peggy and Ewan do something REALLY American! THE OLD LADY ALL SKIN AND BONE ought to make everybody get up and check their phonograph and its operation, so tongue-in-cheek is Peggy and Ewan's moaning singing of it.

What is the reason for this highly unusual and excellent album? Peggy says, "I am not TRYING to sing Scots and English songs -- I merely CANNOT HELP it, living as I do and where I do," and Ewan adds, "When you work with someone over a period of several years, you begin to assimilate elements of their style and vocal habits ... this does not mean that your approach to your own repertoire is affected but it does mean that you can stand on the edge of another musical tradition without feeling conspicuous." Peggy adds, "To sing (British songs) adds immeasurable richness to my understanding of American folksongs and gives a new dimension to their performance." And MacColl seems to be having a fine time singing the American songs. Indeed, it is hard to imagine anyone save the stuffiest of folk-scholars who will not find this album a highly enjoyable musical and folk delight.

CAROLYN HESTER (Tradition 1043)

Carolyn's recording debut of three years ago (SCARLET RIBBONS - Coral 57143)

prompted many to voice the opinion that here was a pretty young singer of better-than-average promise. The sounds she made were hardly ethnic, to be sure, and she was a trained voice -- but she displayed a nice sense of humor and a light (though cute) touch along with the lyric sense one expects of romantic young sopranos. And she had the wit to perform songs like THE WRECK OF THE OLD 97, TEXIAN BOYS, and LOLLY TOO DUM as well as the more conventional DANNY BOY and BLACK IS THE COLOR folknik heartburners. She needed only to drop her hesitant sophistication to become a pleasing and entertaining performer.

But, innocence being the ephemeral quality it is today, Carolyn has chosen the other branch of the road -- as we discover on this new Tradition disc. As the notes tell us, Carolyn is now an ARTIST -- and it's really too bad. Her soprano voice is now so polished that, on VIRGIN MARY, it soared right on by my four-speaker hi-fi system and apparently into the frequency that can be heard only by dogs. And whereas the Coral disc contained a coarse tone or two, and spots where the microphone caught Carolyn gasping for breath at awkward moments (perfectly forgivable faults in folksinging), Carolyn now has such vocal control that she proudly and obviously produces some labored albeit authentic chest tones for

our benefit. Worst of all is the appalling lack of propriety with which they are used -- appearing even in the innocuous OLD WOMAN AND THE LITTLE PIG. Carolyn's light touch is now as playful as a tap on the head with a monkey wrench.

Since Carolyn is now more interested in vocal pyrotechnics than in folk singing, I suppose it is of no importance that her present repertoire is comprised of Broadway show tunes (SUMMERTIME, BLACK-JACK OAK) and folknik love songs (RIBBON BOW, GO AWAY FROM MY WINDOW) draped in melancholy and delivered with all the vocal inflections of a typical Greenwich Village ingenue. The liner notes tell us, of HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN, that "this song has been exploited to the fullest by Carolyn." Amen. Also that THE WATER IS WIDE was learned "during one of her many visits to the Archive Of American Folk Song at the Library of Congress." Carolyn was undoubtedly there at the same time as Mr. Belefonte.

The "new" Carolyn will find enthusiastic acceptance in the current craze for wild-haired, heavily mascaraed, guitar-whamming, waly-waily sopranos -- but she is no longer of interest to folksong fans. As this reviewer sadly adds Carolyn to his little black book of assembly-line folknik sopranos (Joan Baez, Deborah Green, Myra Ross, etc.), it strikes me that she seems to prove once again the American adage (especially appropriate to most young city folk-

singers) that "you can't go home again."  
(Reviewer: Ed Gilbertson)

BILL McADOO SINGS Volume Two (Folkways  
2449)

Bill McAdoo's second album is bound to be of considerable interest to most folk fans, yet may, I'm afraid, cause stirs of reevaluation among the more traditionally minded of us as to the exact value of this young singer and the songs he sings. In LSR #6, we hailed McAdoo as "the best and most important professional Negro folk singer in years," and there is no need to go back on that statement now. McAdoo's competition is such (Bibb, Belafonte, Anderson, Peters, etc.) that he need have no fears as to the defense of his exalted spot. Yet, this second album is strangely unsatisfying. McAdoo seems to have gone backward instead of forward -- faults that one was willing to overlook in the first album are now glaringly hard to dismiss. His guitar work, unaided here by Seeger's banjo support, proves to be weak and cliché-bound -- at one point sinking into an imitation of Josh White's. Vocally, instrumentally, and thematically, he tends to be repetitious and unimaginative. And the main fault now seems to be his songs (McAdoo writes most of his own material). Quite often, there is a poor marriage of words and melody (SAMUEL MABREY, YOU CAN'T LET LITTLE CHILDREN STARVE TO DEATH) which makes one uneasy,

and, much more often and worse, there is usually a resounding lack of anything resembling any emotion other than just plain anger. We are presented the facts of a Negro vs. White situation (quite often written with all the poetry and insight of a poor newspaper article) and we are presented McAdoo's anger -- nothing more. What we are never presented with are any of the other human emotions -- there is very little warmth, love, pity, sadness, or genuine tragedy in McAdoo's songs. Instead, there is only his anger presented in the form of rather heavy-handed propaganda -- one gets the feeling that McAdoo has read one too many issues of SING OUT! True, one cannot help but agree with his cause, but that does not necessarily make his songs good songs. Just because one is against war and racial discrimination doesn't make it necessary to embrace every bomb song or utopian epic as a masterpiece -- most of them are actually pretty bad songs. For example, compare YOU CAN'T LET LITTLE CHILDREN STARVE TO DEATH on this album with John Greenway's performed version of Aunt Molly Jackson's DREADFUL MEMORIES (also concerned with starving children) and I think you'll see what I mean. Aunt Molly's song is one of the most beautiful, tender, heartbreaking songs that I know of (and it IS folk music), while McAdoo's is Protest (deeply felt, to be sure,) with a capital P, but NOT,

I feel, folk music. It is more of a rant, it seems to me, than a vehicle for true expression. There is no denying that events in the world give McAdoo every reason for being mad, but anger presented as mere unreasoning anger doesn't seem to do anybody much good. McAdoo's emotional palette for songwriting seems to contain only the color red, and there are a limited number of things you can do with only one outlook. The CUBA song, for instance, contains all the simple-minded naivete of most modern Protest songs: one side is Holier than Thou; the other side is worse than the Devil himself; and there's no such thing as any real human feeling in sight. Things are not just that simple and Mr. McAdoo knows it (or should know it.). His songs that deal with HIS personal experience are his best ones (EIGHT HUNDRED MILES on his first album; DETROIT BLUES and I DO THE BEST I CAN on this album). Here we do not have the "Folk Process"-y art form restricting his material. Here we do not have mere anger, but also understanding and real emotion. To say that McAdoo is "too young and too angry" seems rather pretentious criticism, albeit true. Yet when Bill McAdoo gains more artistic maturity and performing depth, I think he will be a folksinger to reckon with -- if he can break out of Protest and into protest. Someday, perhaps, he may write a song worthy of comparison

to DREADFUL MEMORIES, LUDLOW MASSACRE, 1913 MASSACRE, etc., but right, now that time is a long way off. Let us all hope Bill makes it.

#### DISCS BY THE CLANCY BROTHERS & MAKEM...

Like many other sentimentalists, I get much the same feeling listening to the singing of Makem and the Clancys that I get watching the Irish motion pictures of director John Ford -- that is, the feeling that more than a little of the essence of traditional rural Irish life is being communicated, not DOCUMENTARILY but ARTISTICALLY (and with the attendant privileges of artistic license). For certainly, like Ford's films, the performing of Makem and the Clancys is just a little larger than life -- combining a bit of broadness, a dose of corn, a dash of showmanship, and a liberal sprinkling of sentimentality in such an outrageously winning and enjoyable manner that one almost wishes the actuality were as appealing as the art.

Those who have watched Tom Makem on the stage, the incarnation of a Gaelic Puck playing the pennywhistle, will agree that here is a born showman and a highly talented entertainer. To see just HOW much more showmanly Tommy has become in the last few years, compare his superb rendition of THE COBBLER as he is doing it these days with the version appearing on THE LARK IN THE MORNING (Tradition

1004) that was recorded six years ago in Ireland by Diane Hamilton. It is to Tommy's credit that his becoming a polished professional performer has enhanced rather than destroyed his talent as a folksinger -- for his showmanship is of an honest Irish sort, full of blarney and high spirit. SONGS OF TOMMY MAKEM (Tradition 1044), his first solo LP, is an excellent job of capturing Tommy's effervescence on wax. While his fine ability as a balladeer is demonstrated by his renditions of THE LOWLANDS OF HOLLAND, THE BUTCHER BOY, and THE FOGGY LEW, it is obvious that the tunes nearest Tommy's heart are those with a touch of the devil in them -- it is difficult for a listener, for example, to keep from shouting out in glee as Tom roars out the swashbuckling BOLD O'DONAHUE. I can think of few honest folk music albums that are at the same time so entertaining as this one. Eric Weisberg plays guitar and banjo accompaniment for Tommy in a manner so imaginative and musically interesting that he may soon rank with Peggy Seeger as an accompanist of British and American folk singing.

THE CLANCY BROTHERS AND TOMMY MAKEM (Tradition 1042) demonstrates that the group as a whole is apparently willing to approach the boundary that separates the smooth from the slick. The shouts, laughs, and cutting up on this record are, compared to the earlier Clancy efforts on Tradition, calculated -- but not obviously so. Like most folksingers-turned-professional, the

lads are beginning to reach beyond their personal background for material -- to printed texts and even Scots songs. Again, with very good results. THE JUG OF PUNCH, led by Pat Clancy, and BRENNAN ON THE MOOR will readily prove to fans of the group that the boys have not lost their touch with either songs of drink or roughhousing. THE CLANCY BROTHERS AND TOMMY MAKEM is a very good LP -- SONGS OF TOMMY MAKEM is a tremendous one. Which is as it should be, for even Mrs. Joan Clancy, the boys' mother, has confided to her sons, "You're all great singers, but Tommy Makem is a greater singer than any one of you."

#### CAROLINA SLIM: BLUES FROM THE COTTEN FIELDS (Sharp 2002)

According to the notes on his album, Carolina Slim died last year in Newark. His real name was Ed Harris; he came from Texas; he was six feet four; and he was known as Georgia Pine as well as Carolina Slim. (Not much else in the notes is worth reading.) He was a fine blues singer in the mainstream of traditional blues. In this album he does twelve blues -- eight slow and four fast -- with his guitar and an unobtrusive drum accompaniment.

Slim's guitar playing on the slow numbers is very similar to Lightnin' Hopkins,

whom he has probably studied closely. His singing and general style of performing are more in the older tradition of Furry Lewis and Jim Jackson, however. Like Lewis, he is easygoing and extroverted rather than moody and introverted as is Hopkins. He is sad -- but not bitter -- on the slow blues. Whereas Hopkins' blues are personal poems which we sometimes find difficult to feel ourselves a part of, Carolina Slim's blues are our own -- and one feels perfectly at ease singing them. (If this album gets the kind of distribution it deserves, I predict that it will have a wide influence on the better college folksingers.) It is on the fast numbers, especially the two on the first side, that Slim's guitar playing is especially remarkable. It is as inventive as Lewis' and much more interesting than is Hopkins' on his fast numbers. Slim's singing on RAG MAMA, a variant of SALTY DOG, is a special masterpiece. This is a fine album well worth owning, and a decided bargain at \$3.98. Slim's death kept him from attaining the popularity on the concert circuit which certainly would have come to him had he lived, but he has left us with a superb document of his unspoiled music. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

THE BORDERS. (Folkways 8776)

Subtitled "Songs and Dances of the

English-Scottish Border" this LP, recorded by Sam Charters, provides an ample and delightful aural record of both the music and the people who live in that misty and romantic history-laden area between Scotland and England -- the Borders.

It is hard to imagine how Charters, hitherto known for his work with Negro jazz and blues in the American South, could have possibly produced a better record than this. His years of recording and editing experience have paid off handsomely here. For he has had the wisdom to include both the conversation as well as the music of his informants, and as a result, the listener is drawn intimately more close to the performances than he otherwise would have been. This album has an unforgettable quality of naturalness and informality that is rare on field recordings. It is this quality which makes the album so successful, and Charters must be praised mightily for capturing it. The music itself has been culled from three main sources: the musically-rich Scott family (Tom, Will, Sandy, Jimmy, and Nan) of Kelty and Hawick in Scotland; a fine and facile fiddler, Rob Hobkirk, also from Hawick; and, representing England, a Northumbrian Small Piper named Tom Breckons, whose lilting, sparkling pipe-playing is quite the most delightful thing on the album. Hobkirk plays his way through seven fiddle tunes (among them a Scottish reel

believed to be the source of the American breakdown, THE DEVIL'S DREAM) in agile and decorative fashion, and the singing Scotts contribute five numbers and a sentimental recitation to round out the album. Jimmy Scott's prancing NICKIE TAMS is well worth study.

Charters has provided us here with a rich treasury of music from England and Scotland. All serious folk record collectors must have this disc. There are no "big" songs here, nor are there any "big" singers -- only the beautiful and natural stuff of which folk music is made.

#### TWO NEW LP'S BY BIG JOE WILLIAMS.....

Big Joe (sometimes known as Po' Joe) Williams is Chris Strachwitz's second offering to members of the International Blues Club on TOUGH TIMES (Arhoolie 1002). Joe is a solid, earthy singer more in the straight blues vein than is Mance Lipscomb, the singer featured on the IBRC's initial venture (see review later in issue). Williams has been around a long time, and his guitar playing (here an unobtrusively amplified one) reflects all that he has absorbed -- as do his songs, a mixture of tradition and autobiographical improvisation. Joe opens the disc with SLOPPY DRUNK BLUES, a tune associated with the original Sonny Boy Williamson, whom Joe worked with for a while; and continues with PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT (probably one of the best eulogies he has recieved!) and FORTY-FOUR BLUES, a piano piece Joe

has adapted to the guitar. SHAKE YOUR BOOGIE is perhaps responsible for the lack of transcribed lyrics in the disc's booklet -- the opening verse would be quite unmailable printed matter. Also here is SHE LEFT ME A MULE TO RIDE, a song which is Big Joe's most often recorded number, if not his trademark. A sad postscript is provided by the duet Joe sings with his wife, Mary, on the gospel number I WANT MY CROWN ("When I've done the best I can, I want my crown.."), for Mary Williams died just two months ago.

PINEY WOODS BLUES (Delmar DL 602) was recorded a bit earlier than the Arhoolie, though few others than avid blues buffs have even heard of the record. (Delmar is a small Chicago company formerly specializing in jazz, which plans an extensive "ROOTS OF THE BLUES" series.) Here Big Joe is in a more comfortable and reminiscent mood. Playing an unamplified 9 string guitar (I prefer the sharper and cleaner amplified sound) in a more wide-open style, Joe reaches back through time to the sound of the early 40's and produces OMAHA BLUES, NO MORE WHISKEY, JUANITA, and other Williams originals -- as well as Sonny Boy's GOOD MORNING, LITTLE SCHOOLGIRL and Blind Lemon's PEACH ORCHARD. J. D. Short, who plays a flailing guitar and a restrained mouth harp simultaneously,

joins Joe on NO MORE WHISKEY and three other cuts. Also included is a cut of Big Joe talking about Sonny Boy and the earlier days of the blues.

Both albums are highly recommended: each presents a different facet of the artist, each does it well. The Arhoolie will perhaps be of most general interest; the Delmar of more specific value to blues fans. The liner notes for the Delmar LP, by Bob Koester, are especially good.

If your local shop doesn't stock these labels, \$4.98 to Delmar Records/ 439 So. Wabash/ Chicago 5; and the same amount to Arhoolie Records/ P.O. Box 671/ Los Gatos, California will bring you postpaid two fine albums of one of the old-time blues men -- doing the unadulterated blues. (Reviewer: Dave Glover)

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ With Billie and De De Pierce, Brother Randolph, and Lucius Bridges (Folk-Lyric 110)

Another one of Harry Oster's fabulous ethnic documents. Mr. and Mrs. Pierce are a couple of veteran New Orleans jazz musicians, playing trumpet and piano respectively. Both have a list of credits that read like an encyclopedia of early jazz. While many New Orleans musicians have changed their style to conform with "dixieland" ideas to lure in the tourists, the Pierces have continued to play in the old way in rela-

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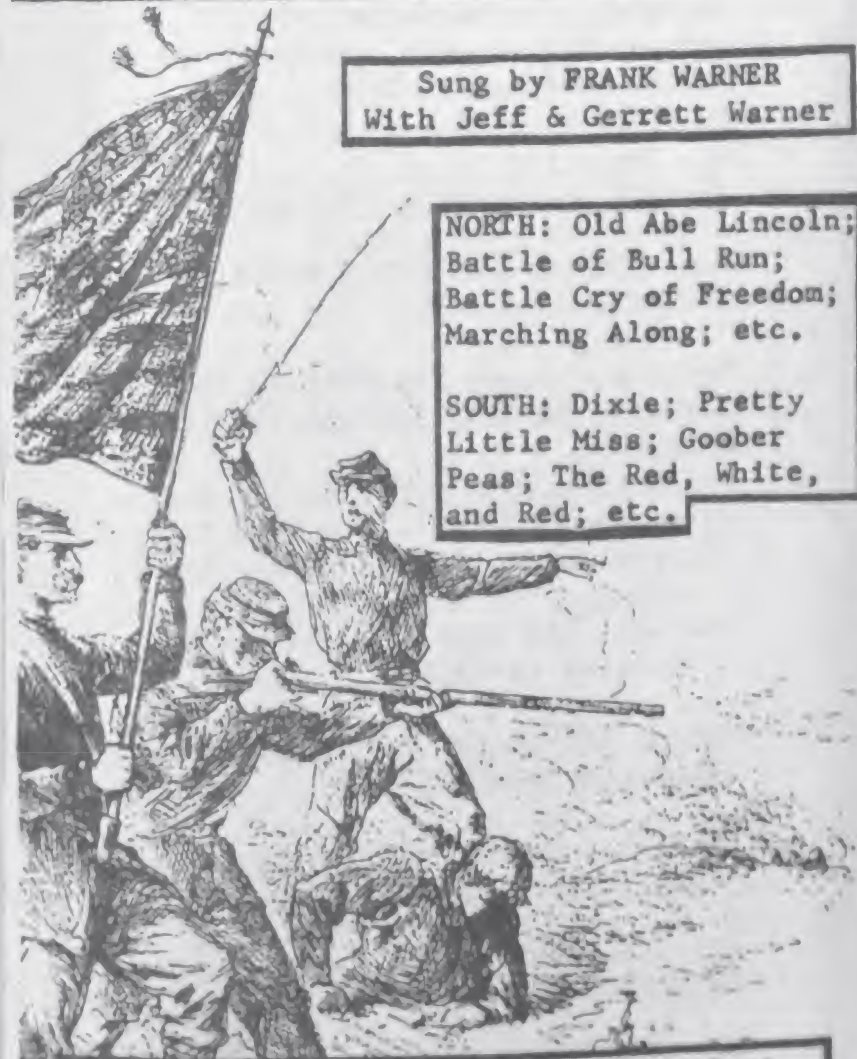
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tive obscurity. They play through a number of old jazz standards (PANAMA, MAMA DON'T 'LOW, GULF COAST BLUES, SOME OF THESE DAYS) with compelling authenticity and honesty and produce some fine fun as well. Mrs. Pierce sings in the Bessie Smith manner, while De De plays a truly beautiful New Orleans trumpet. Brother Randolph bangs the washboard, and Bridges contributes one vocal on a New Orleans version of JOHN HENRY. This album is intended primarily for jazz collectors, and this magazine is not the place to go into its jazz values at length, but it certainly deserves a long listen as "the result of folk expression in an urban environment," an integral part of our musical culture. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

COSMO ALLEY PRESENTS BOB GROSSMAN  
(Eureka 501)

Here then is another recorded example of that well-known West Coast species of "folk" music called "coffee house." Young (19-year-old) Bob Grossman plays rather middle-of-the-road guitar, draws his repertoire from the usual pop sources and manages to sound like both Harry Belafonte and Bob Gibson at the same time. This, perhaps, is his biggest distinction. Naturally, some of his numbers contain "verses which have been up-dated to incorporate the feeling of our society today." One of his songs is called MY FRECKLED FACE CONSUMPTIVE

SARO JANE. Which says a lot about today's troubled society. Actually though, there is one good thing that must be said about young Grossman -- at 19, he is as smooth and as able a performer as many entertainers twice his age. His singing is pleasing, and, as the record indicates, he knows how to handle an audience. All of which doesn't make him worth much of anything as a folk singer, but should insure him almost immediate popular success (which, I presume, is what he's after). At this writing, Grossman has embarked on a club tour into the Midwest. Should any of you fans of better folkum want this record, it can be obtained by sending \$3.98 to Eureka and Lectern Record Company, 1471 N. Tamarind Ave., Hollywood 28, Calif. (Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

Editors' Note: Lectern has a most interesting catalog, containing albums on anthropology (PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY by David L. Jennings; CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY by Dr. Walter Goldschmidt), art (IMPRESSSIONALISM AND THE HISTORY OF MODERN ART by Richard Cassady), English grammar (ENGLISH GRAMMAR by Nina Willis Walter), and American history (U.S. HISTORY TO 1865 by Dr. P.J. Schlessinger). It seems to be a very interesting cultural label, and some may want to write for a complete catalog.. Judging from the intellectualism contained on Lectern, perhaps we can expect some far better folk albums than the one issued so far on Eureka.

## PRISON WORKSONGS (Folk-Lyric LFS A-5)

Another recordfull of great music from Louisiana's Negro penitentiary at Angola. This one features some of the same singers heard on Oster's other Angola discs, plus many others. In almost every case the singers were recorded while actually performing the various tasks of prison labor, ranging from chopping wood to running the machine that makes Louisiana's auto license plates. The realism is compelling.

This album and its extensive notes support Alan Lomax's statement (in the SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES on Atlantic records) that worksong singing is dying out. However, it is far from dead, (at least at Angola), and this album is a great living document of the tradition. Many well-known songs appear in one variant or another on the album: TAKE THIS HAMMER, STEWBALL, LET YOUR HAMMER RING, and JOHN HENRY, to name the most famous. These performances, fragmentary as some of them are, should be required listening for anybody who sings these songs. LET YOUR HAMMER RING is especially noteworthy here, a free-verse poem with real artistic unity.

This set is another tribute to the genius of Harry Oster as a collector in its combination of values as a first-class ethnic survey and as a musical document -- a set that can be listened to for real enjoyment completely aside

from purposes of study. A fat booklet of texts and notes is included.

Though it does not detract in the least from the value or quality of the album, it is interesting to note one error in the texts just to illustrate the complexity of the problems of transcription: One of the songs, #4 on Side 1, sung by a laundry-woman, is a nearly exact copy of a rhythm-and-blues hit of a few years ago. The R&B record's lyrics read: "I Got a job in a steel-mill/Truckin' steel like a slave" at one point. The singer on Oster's set sings "saw-mill" for "steel-mill" but sings "steel" in the second line. Oster, who apparently hasn't heard the R&B disc (not exactly an unpardonable sin) could not have understood the reference to "steel" in the line "Truckin' steel like a slave," which he therefore mistranscribes as "So I could feel I could play." It is a tricky business.

Little more remains to be said -- except that here we have the real thing, which Josh White, etc, etc, struggle to imitate as they sing in their plush night clubs. These long-term prisoners sing it out in all its glory with no effort at all -- its very purpose is to reduce and lighten their effort. Sets like this one make a lot of other sets seem pretty pointless. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

#### THE CARTER FAMILY: KEEP ON THE SUNNYSIDE (Acme LP. 2)

Three points must be immediately understood about this record: (1.) The singers heard here are NOT the original Carter Family (A.P. Carter; his wife, Sara; and his sister-in-law, Maybelle Carter) of country music fame in the 20's and 30's. The present personnel: Sara Carter (lead voice, autoharp), A.P. Carter (voice), their son, Joe (bass voice, guitar), and their daughter, Janette Carter Jett (harmony alto voice, guitar). (2.) These sides, considering the age of Sara and A.P. and the amateurishness of their children, are rough and uneven musical performances. Those who appreciate the Carters as professional country musicians will find nothing of interest here -- though others may well feel that these performances are closer to a folk music character than many of the slicker Carter sides of 25 years ago. I choose to simply regard this disc as a recording of a Southern family that enjoys singing and playing old-timey songs, and, as such, I enjoy it greatly. (3.) The fidelity of this disc is the worst I have ever heard on any long-play record. The technical shoddiness of the entire production is best exemplified by the title of the song SOWING ON THE MOUNTAIN appearing on the record label as SEWING IN THE MORNING.

Sara's voice is still surprisingly strong,

and has not changed as much since 1935 as it did in the years from 1927 to the mid-thirties. The combined guitars of Joe and Janette produce a reasonable facsimile of Maybelle's accompaniment -- though Janette's harmony singing is not in a class with Maybelle's. The unique Carter ability to take up the most maudlin and sentimental of songs and perform them in such a manner as to convince us they are sincere and moving emotional expression seems largely intact. As evidence, I offer the wonderful version of GOLD WATCH AND CHAIN. Who else but Sara Carter could sing, so unabashedly and so effectively, such lyrics as: "Now take back all the gifts you have given/Your gold ring and a lock of your hair/And the card with your picture upon it/It's a face that is false but it's fair"? Other Carter standards included on the disc: SHIP AHOY ("It's the old ship of Zion....Loudly I cried 'Ship ahoy!'", BEAUTIFUL ISLE OER THE SEA, WORRIED MAN BLUES, and LITTLE MOSES. Of additional interest is an amusing and tuneful parody, written and sung by Janette, of the old-time Carter-type love songs, entitled PRETTY LITTLE RAINDROPS ("Raindrops on my windapane/I know I'll never be the same/Without you I wish that I was dead").

I have made the faults of this record quite clear, and together with the \$3.98 list price, they will perhaps scare off all but the most enthusiastic Carter devotees. These stalwarts (myself included) will purchase the record (from JIMMIE SKINNER,

222 E. 5th St., Cincinnati 2, Ohio; who also handles the first Carter Acme LP, THE CARTER FAMILY SINGS ALL-TIME FAVORITES) and consider it money well spent.

ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS: FREE AGAIN (Prestige-Bluesville 1026)

Robert Pete, now paroled from his life sentence at Angola into the seven-year, serf-like custody of a Louisiana farmer, is featured here in his second LP. This one, like the first, was recorded and edited by Harry Oster, and appears on Bluesville under the aegis of Kenneth S. Goldstein. This is a "new" Bluesville, unsullied by organ or rhythm section, and a very fine release.

It is up to the high standards that Oster has maintained with his own Folk-Lyric releases. Robert Pete sings and plays with the same fire and brilliance that marked his first LP, THOSE PRISON BLUES (Folk-Lyric 109). The Bluesville disc was apparently made after his parole (though the cover shows Robert Pete in what looks very much like a cell). He sounds brighter, freer, and more open than in the first LP, though he is still bitter. His songs cover a wide range of subjects (more than in the first set): sickness and death, loneliness, wanderlust, work, old age, heaven and freedom are all subjects of Robert Pete's improvisations -- with the

sex element appearing as an overtone throughout the set rather than as a principal subject. He still takes predominantly fast tempos, his unique voice crying out the words as his fingers do a marvelous dance on the strings of his guitar. His harmonic and metrical structure is very, very free -- his guitar keeps strict time while his voice shouts impulsively, comparatively free of metrical considerations.

Robert Pete is not a universal man like Leadbelly or Mance Lipscomb or even Lightnin' Hopkins. He is more like John Lee Hooker, a man who has concentrated on one type of song and one way of singing it, has originated most of his own material, and has excluded anything which does not fit into this pattern. The style, with both Williams and Hooker, is a completely individual thing -- like no other man's. A whole LP of Hooker or of Williams may be a trying experience for one not acclimated with and sympathetic to the blues, but for one who has learned to enjoy the traditional blues, such performances stand at the very peak. Some singers, Leadbelly for example, have something for every listener; but Williams will appeal only to those who are willing to meet him halfway. For those who will do this, this album, like Robert Pete's first, will be a real treasure. Bluesville has done a thoroughly admirable job of production. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

## THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN: FOLK SONGS AND BLUEGRASS (Folkways 2410)

The four young musicians known as The Country Gentlemen are vocally, both in solo and quartet singing, among the best in the field of country and Bluegrass music. Their high, hard singing of sentimental laments and love songs is as good on this album (THE FIELDS HAVE TURNED BROWN, BEHIND THESE PRISON WALLS OF LOVE, etc.) as it was on their first LP (Folkways 2409) -- passionate, highly dramatic, and musically solid.

Instrumentally, the Gents are one of the most progressive and jazzy of Bluegrass bands. Eschewing the traditional fiddle, they employ mandolin, guitar or dobro, a banjoist with a predilection for off-beat, modern chord patterns, and a fast, jivey bassist. Their instrumental backing of the subdued ballads is satisfactory, but their breakdowns are almost completely irrelevant to traditional hill music -- and if a listener is willing to go as far out as the Gents are willing to take him, he will find himself in the musical environs of Don Reno and abstract, countrified jazz. Needless to say, this instrumental approach is ruinous to the traditional songs -- HAND-SOME MOLLY, a shy fragment of a ballad, falls to pieces under the Gents' heavy touch: fiddle-less and accompanied by Scruggs-style banjo and a whining, bopping dobro. TRAIN 45, led by the self-same wailing dobro, comes out resembling a

country musician's concept of French musique concrete.

The Country Gentlemen have carved out a unique spot for themselves in the country music field, and the many-faceted charm of their honest, emotional singing and always interesting (if not always successful) instrumentals certainly should earn them at least a trial listening-to by country/Bluegrass and folk music fans as well.

ARBEE STIDHAM: TIRED OF WANDERING (Prestige-Bluesville 1021)

ARBEE'S BLUES (Folkways 3824)

The late 1940's were a transitional period in the blues. The old greats -- Sonny Boy Williamson, Big Bill, Tampa Red, Big Maceo, Jazz Gillum -- were reaching the ends of their careers (if we discount Broonzy's European fling in the 1950's). On the other hand, Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee were just coming into prominence, and such future greats as Lightnin' Hopkins, Ray Charles, John Lee Hooker, and Muddy Waters were cutting their first records. In the late 40's one of the most popular R&B singers -- for a brief time the most popular -- was a Victor recording artist named Arbee Stidham. Stidham had grown up with the blues, but in the 40's his recorded repertoire consisted almost entirely of mawkish ballads and hipster tunes, each one triter than the last. In the 50's illness forced Stidham to retire, but a few years ago (with the en-

couragement of (Big Bill) Stidham took up the electric guitar and started singing again -- in a style much closer to the blues than was his former "pop" style. These two albums, released almost simultaneously, reveal that Stidham has matured tremendously and is now one of the very best performers in the Chicago style that lies midway between sophisticated city and primitive country blues.

Choosing between the two albums is a very difficult task; both are well worth the price asked. Both sets feature classic blues (GOOD MORNING BLUES, IN THE EVENING, CARELESS LOVE in the Folkways; PAWNSHOP and WEE BABY BLUES in the Prestige) combined with fine Stidham originals. In both sets Stidham is accompanied by a small combo. On the Folkways his voice is a little rougher and his guitar has a more characteristic R&B sound. On the Prestige he sings more clearly (but no less convincingly) and his guitar has a smoother sound, probably due to a more expensive amplifier. On the Folkways set, Stidham is accompanied on piano (very solidly) and organ (in a very flowery manner) by the formidable Memphis Slim. Prestige's pianist is a young Chicago man named John Wright, who doesn't quite approach Slim's power on the fast numbers, but is more than a match for him on the slow numbers which dominate the set. I have never heard more sensitive or imaginative traditional blues piano than

than Wright gives us on this set. (Wright is featured in a freer setting in SOUTH SIDE SOUL, Prestige 7190, an album of piano solos with rhythm -- highly recommended.) King Curtis, the tireless R&B saxophonist, adds a dash of zest to several numbers on the Prestige set.

It is pretty much a horse apiece between these sets -- the Prestige winning by a nose in my judgment. Both sets have fine notes, especially those by Charles Edward Smith for Folkways. (One minor point: MISERY BLUES on the Folkways is not in "calypso" style, as Smith says, but in the familiar "Latin" beat which blues men took over from Afro-Cuban music many years ago.) Kudos for both companies, and compliments to Stidham for a fine comeback. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

BILLY EDD WHEELER AND JOAN SOMMER: BILLY EDD, U. S. A. (Monitor 354)

Those of us who have a deep love for the music of the Southern Mountains have ample reason to cry "Hoax!" at the top of our lungs at both Monitor Records and Hargail Press for advertising someone named Billy Edd Wheeler as "the singing bard of Berea, Kentucky." Maybe he is from Kentucky, but it sure doesn't show in his singing! Advertising anyone as a "singing bard of Berea, Kentucky" certainly connotes visions of an ethnic

performer singing and playing real mountain folksongs -- and not of a young folknik singing some of the most feeble original compositions I've heard in a long time, and being helped out at it by bass and drums! Young Mr. Wheeler's songs and his mode of presenting them suggest that his natural home should not be Berea, Kentucky, at all -- it should be Broadway in New York City. There he could play "Curly" in OKLAHOMA and other similar Gordon MacRae-type parts. Nothing in this album suggests he's a folksinger. Pretty Mrs. Sommer, shown wistfully at her guitar, is that sweet-sweet soprano who has "a profound feeling for the blues." She is described in John Jacob Niles' (the Edgar Allan Poe of Lexington, Kentucky) weird liner notes as "an actress married to an actor." Mr. Wheeler is quoted in these same notes as saying that, as far as he knows, several of his songs are "still floating loose among the coves and hidden pockets of those West Virginia hills." Let us hope they are never captured. (Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

COUNTRY NEGRO JAM SESSIONS (Folk-Lyric FL 111) Recorded by Harry Oster.

Another superb album from Louisiana's master collector, Harry Oster. Featured in this high-spirited set are Dutch Cagle and Willie B. Thomas, whom Oster featured at the last Newport Folk Festival. Cagle

is an alley fiddler in the marvelous old Negro style. He holds the fiddle against his chest and the bow about a fourth of the way from the end, and makes out of it a vehicle par excellence for Negro blues melody. Thomas is a very primitive, intensely rhythmic blues guitarist. A number of other exciting if unknown Louisiana Negro musicians appear for one or two numbers apiece, and there is one song by Robert Pete Williams.

Though some of the lyrics express the most abject misfortune, the general tone of this album is an infectious joie de vivre not unlike that of Oster's Cajun album. Many of the tunes were learned off rhythm-and-blues records, a few off blues discs from the 20's and 30's. This record, compared with the originals (most, but not all, of which are hard to find -- see below), is an excellent example of the phonograph serving as a medium in the folk process. Interesting sidelights include an old vaudeville tune, WHO BROKE THE LOCK ON THE HENHOUSE DOOR, sung by Butch and Willie; and a musical-therapy session at the State Mental Hospital.

For the record, there are a couple of spirituals, one by Butch and Willie (who are unique among country Negroes in performing both blues and spirituals).

There is little more to be said except that anybody interested in the musical culture of the South will find this (as usual with Oster's records) a valued ac-

(Cont. page 39)

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# NEW RELEASES

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FH5343 FOLKSONGS OF IDAHO AND UTAH, sung by Rosalie Sorrels: The Lineman's Hymn; Brigham Young; Winter Song; Death of Kathy Fiscus; I'll Give You My Story; The Girl That Played Injun With Me; Utah's Dixie; Empty Cots in the Bunkhouse Tonight; Tying Knots in the Devil's Tail; The Fox; Way Out in Idaho; My Last Cigar; The Wreck of the Old Number Nine; The House Carpenter; The Wild Colonial Boy; I Left My Baby; The Philadelphia Lawyer.

## FOLKWAYS RECORDS

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quisition, and that its entertainment value is phenomenal. There are two sets of notes: brief ones on the back of the jacket, more detailed ones with texts inside. This is not a bad idea.

Three of the numbers on this set are songs sung on Chess and Checker singles which were probably (in one case, definitely) heard by the singers on the Oster LP. Many record stores can order the Chess and Checker discs.

SMOKES LIKE LIGHTNIN' -- on Chess #1618, and on the Chess LP MOANIN' IN THE MOONLIGHT by Howlin' Wolf as SMOKE STACK LIGHTNIN'.

YOU DON'T LOVE ME BABY -- on Checker #819 by Bo Diddley, as SHE'S FINE SHE'S MINE.

YOUR DICE WON'T PASS -- on Chess #1612 by Muddy Waters, as TROUBLE NO MORE.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

RONNIE GILBERT: COME AND GO WITH ME  
(Vanguard 9052)

As practically everyone knows, Ronnie Gilbert is the female member of that most popular of all folksong quartets, the Weavers. (For years, I thought it was Lee Hays. But now I know -- it's Ronnie Gilbert.) And, also for years, Vanguard has been promising this album (witness the number: the newest Vanguard folk

release is 9090). Now that it's here, I can't think of a single thing to say about it except, "So what?" You can pretty well tell what to expect by a run-down of some of the titles: COME AND GO WITH ME, JOHNNY HAS GONE FOR A SOLDIER, MEETING AT THE BUILDING, GO AWAY FROM MY WINDOW, ANOTHER MAN DONE GONE, SPANISH IS THE LOVING TONGUE, etc. I think Vanguard should have titled the album THE HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN AND OTHER FOLK FAVORITES, though. Then when they do a Freddy Hellerman album, they can call it TWO BROTHERS AND OTHER FOLK FAVORITES.

The notes on this album say that IN THE EVENING is "sung like a back porch ballad." That's nice to know. I don't want to disparage Miss Gilbert's singing or anything (far be it from me to criticize the Weavers or any part of them), but, for the life of me, I can't see any reason for the existence of this record. I tried, but I can't. It will undoubtedly be snapped up by countless folkum fans just the same. (Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

SAM HINTON: THE SONG OF MEN (Folkways 2400)

Here is an interestingly organized album, presenting a more coherent theme than most medley albums. The "Song of Men" topic is subdivided into such sections as FARMERS, LABORERS, PIONEERS, INSTRUMENTALISTS, etc. -- each with illustrative and representative songs. Were the songs selected field  
(Cont. on page 43)

THE FOLK MUSIC OF THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL 1959-60 (Folkways 2431) Volume One.  
THE FOLK MUSIC OF THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL 1959-60 (Folkways 2432) Volume Two.

In LSR #12, in our review of Vanguard's 2-LP NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL set, we bemoaned the fact that Manny Solomon & Company did not see fit to include "Jesse Fuller, Butch Cage and Willie Thomas, Frank Warner, Fleming Brown, and the Clancy Brothers -- all of whom were listed on the program." Now Folkways has come along and put all of these artists (with the exception of Jesse Fuller, who didn't get to Newport in time) in two very good albums, called, with a good degree of appropriateness, the FOLK MUSIC of the Newport Folk Festival, 1959-1960. While it is true that most of the performers included here are from the city (there were painfully few rural folk artists at Newport either year), there are also some wonderful glimpses of the old traditions in the singing and playing of Butch Cage and Willie Thomas, and the unaccompanied balladeering of the Canadian singer, O. J. Abbott. Indeed, these people walk off with the top honors of the set with all the ease and certainty of the wily old veteran showing the young whipper-snapper just what folk music's all about. Willie and Butch do two beautiful numbers (I'M A STRANGER HERE and 44 BLUES) that make most modern blues singers sound like still-

wet-behind-the-ears city-billies. Cage's fiddle (and what a blues instrument THAT is in the right hands!) is brilliantly mood-evoking on STRANGER HERE, strongly reminiscent of Uncle Bunt Stephens' LOUISBURG BLUES (Columbia Black Label #15071) of old-time record fame, and Thomas' guitar rings loud and clear behind him. Their primitive style of singing makes most blues sound very watered-down and feeble by comparison. Mr. Abbott, a most welcome visitor from Canada, does a wonderfully funny ON THE BANKS OF THE DON, displaying all the mastery of the unaccompanied traditional ballad singer. He is joined by Pete Seeger's banjo for a fine encore number, BARLEY GRAIN. So much for the ethnic performers.

The city singers heard here include some of the very best from among their rank: Mike Seeger, The New Lost City Ramblers, Pete Seeger, Fleming Brown, Frank Warner, John Greenway, Pat Clancy, Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, Alan Mills, Guy Carawan, and Frank Hamilton. Almost all of them do quite well. Leading the way, in my mind's eye, is Mike Seeger, my favorite city folksinger, with an autoharp version of FAIR ELLENDER that gives ample evidence as to why he is referred to in these pages as "our finest city singer of old-time music." The Ramblers roar in close behind with three fine numbers -- HOP HIGH LADIES, UP JUMPED (NEWPORT cont. page 44)

(Cont. from page 40)

recordings or samples of authentic folk singers, this record could have been a wonderful folk song survey of America's true "Song of Men", perfect for school work or as an introduction for children to the social and cultural context of folk song.

As it is, the record is a complete failure -- for Sam Hinton (despite his impressive background in collecting and teaching folk music, his obvious love for the music, and his honesty and integrity) denies us the opportunity of encountering the folk songs as a total, meaningful experience -- i.e. in their stylistic entirety. Hinton can be said to be singing the songs only inasmuch as he communicates to us the melody and text (for which purpose the page of printed music has been devised). He is not, however, performing the songs as artistic wholes -- his honesty and love are requisites of, not substitutes for, complete artistry. Whether he is unwilling or unable or doesn't know enough to sing in at least an approximation of folk song style (rather than in the flavorless, colorless, and ultimately meaningless city-folknik style he does sing in) is impossible to discern from merely listening to him. As the record stands, it seems to me that Negro worksongs, badman tunes, Anglo-Irish ballads, and the like, all sung in the same manner with the same vocal tone and color and the same bland pleasantness completely negate a collection of songs which purports to be "The Song of Men -- All Sorts and Kinds."

(NEWPORT cont. from page 42)

THE DEVIL, and TAKE A DRINK ON ME -- the sound of which should tempt Moses Asch to record the group "in concert" -- they have so much more fire and life that way. As proof of this, I offer the UP JUMPED THE DEVIL on this record to that on THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS Vol. II. However, in studio or out, the NLCR is still so far superior to any other folk group now singing that the point I'm making seems small indeed.

Fleming Brown should gain much well-deserved attention with his two fine banjo numbers, RAKE AND A RAMBLING BLADE and HIRAM HUBBARD. The latter is especially admirable. I, for one, would certainly not be sorry if Folkways or some other enterprising recording company decided to issue a solo album of young Mr. Brown. Alan Mills is surprisingly virile and pleasing on both CITADEL HILL and COD LIVER OIL. One may wish that Jean Carignan were present for at least one number, though. Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee sound quite lackadaisical on both of their songs. MIDNIGHT SPECIAL is downright bad, while Sonny's waspish harmonica manages to lend some value to an otherwise uneventful LIVING WITH THE BLUES.

It is always nice to hear Frank Warner, but, in all fairness, I must say that he has been heard to better effect on other records. His FOD! is done well here, but both AS I WAS OUT WALKING and an Odetta-ish

ASHVILLE JUNCTION are not up to Warner's usual high standards. Frank Hamilton does not show up too well either, largely because he has chosen to do two bluesy numbers (I'M A STRANGER HERE and I AM A PILGRIM) which invite comparison with the Cage-Thomas selections. John Greenway plays and sings a rather heavy-handed TALKING DUST BOWL, while Pete Seeger does a good job on his well-known classic (adopted from Uncle Dave Macon), THE CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN BEAR CHASE. Tom Clancy contributes a MacColl-ish, but nice, BONNY BUNCH OF ROSES ♪, and Guy Caravan, at his best, leading the audience in singing the inspiring WE SHALL OVERCOME, rounds things off.

Not that these albums are without faults: some of the editing is atrocious, with both beginnings and endings clipped short; the liner notes are the most inaccurate I've ever seen on a Folkways album (HIRAM HUBBARD is called TOM HUBBARD on both the record label and jacket, no one has bothered to identify UP JUMPED THE DEVIL -- it is simply called INSTRUMENTAL on both label and jacket); and the extraneous sounds are often quite bothersome. Yet, taken as a whole, here are two records that most folk fans will want to own. They, along with the best of the 5 Vanguard discs (3 in 1959; 2 in 1960), contain quite enough good folk music to warrant a place in any serious folk record collection.

## CHARLIE PATTON (Origin 1)

This is the first production of the Origin Jazz library, a Brooklyn outfit which plans to devote itself to printing up LP releases of ancient blues records in batches of 500. Charlie Patton is a legendary character who lived and worked around Clarksdale, Mississippi (which might call itself the country blues capital of the world). He made a good many records, which have subsequently become extremely rare. This is planned as the first of two Patton LP's, and it presents the quieter, more intimate side of his personality. The second LP will present him with a fiddler, in dance tunes.

Aside from a couple of standards (I SHALL NOT BE MOVED, FRANKIE AND ALBERT), the songs seem to be Patton's own personal creations. Some of them seem to have been improvised on the spot. They are about people and places of the Clarksdale of the 1920's, by and large, with some material on more general themes. Some of the songs are mysterious, dark, and difficult to comprehend -- others are downright infectious. Comparison of Patton's delivery, rhythmic and intimately interwoven with his guitar playing, with the declamatory style of his contemporary, Blind Lemon Jefferson, provides a handy comparison of Texas and Mississippi blues styles.

This is an album produced for specialists, and a real prize for dedicated blues collectors -- for whom it fulfills a crying need -- yet is not without its appeal for non-blues collectors. Despite the bizarre layout of the cover (which was also used for an advertising circular) the notes are very good. One final note: the original 78's from which this set was made are on the scratchy side, and four tracks were made from the only copies of the respective recordings known to exist. If this does not diminish your interest, this set is for you. (Reviewer: B. Hansen)

Editors' Note: Origin Records may be ordered from the Origin Jazz Library, 39 Remsen Street (1E), Brooklyn Heights 1, New York. Price is \$5.00 per copy.

## LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS ISSUES .....

As often happens in the blues recording business, the same artist has turned up on three new discs at once -- two "live" recordings, and one composed of re-released 45rpm singles.

I am happy to say that both "live" discs are superb. The two of them were released with vastly different things in mind, and each is tops for what it is trying to do.

LIGHTNIN' (Prestige-Bluesville 1019) features Lightnin' in his accustomed R&B framework, with guitar (unamplified this time) and a fine rhythm section. He does those ageless and nameless songs which

reappear with new titles in the repertoire of every traditional blues singer. The album is about evenly divided between slow and fast tempos, and Lightnin' shines admirably on both. Here is Lightnin' on stage, as he performs for his large audiences and record fans, and this most traditional of contemporary R&B artists gives an unforgettable vocal and guitar performance.

Candid Records, on the other hand, has recorded a much more intimate, personal performance such as Lightnin' might give for a few friends in someone's home late at night. LIGHTNIN' IN NEW YORK (Candid 8010) contains no rhythm section, and Lightnin' seems to have been given a free hand in the making of the tapes. Never, not even on the Folkways disc made in his Houston home, has Lightnin' sounded so relaxed as on this set -- so much so that, at times, he almost stops dead in the middle of a song, then continues. One even begins to forget that he is a professional entertainer, for there is no attempt to put on a show for anybody, no going out of the way to hold the interest of an indifferent audience. This is a set intended for real devotees of the blues, and no concessions are made to anybody else.

The album has eight tracks averaging well over five minutes each, and in this extended format Lightnin' is able to develop the individual performances to a much greater extent than is usual on (Hopkins cont. page 51)

THE WAYFARERS TRIO: SONGS OF THE BLUE AND GREY (Mercury 20634)  
MARIJOHN WILKEN: BALLADS OF THE BLUE AND GREY (Columbia 1641)

The way that producers of phonograph records, books, and the visual arts have taken to the Civil War lately, one wonders if Madison Avenue would have us fight it all over again in the name of economic advancement of big business or something like that. Here are two more albums that can be crammed into the already overcrowded field of pseudo-Civil War lore. Neither has much distinction, although one (the Wayfarers) claims to be "authentic in every detail." Its "authenticity" may be measured by the fact that it contains two songs by Paul Clayton, Pete Seeger's HAMMER SONG, and that most spiteful of all Tin Pan Alley Blue-and-Grey ditties, TWO BROTHERS. The fact that the W-Trio sounds just like the K-Trio doesn't help much, either. Miss Wilken has seen fit to include TWO BROTHERS on her album, also. She is aided (to use the word loosely) by the Jordanaires. If any of you feel you must own a Civil War album, I would recommend that you obtain the Frank Warner issue on Prestige (to be reviewed in the next LSR). (Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

SING OUT WITH PETE! (Folkways 2455)

Despite Pete Seeger's recent difficulties in the courts, his burgeoningly attended concerts, more frequent appearances on nationwide television hook-ups, and impending Columbia recording would seem to indicate that his career is about to enter a new, more-popular-than-ever phase.

This newest Seeger recording seems designed to provide a sampling of Pete's best in-concert numbers for the newer members of his audience. The record, which is the most attractive and saleable looking issue in the Folkways catalogue, contains such Seeger standbys as DOWN BY THE RIVERSIDE, MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE, I'M ON MY WAY, DEEP BLUE SEA, QUE BONITA BANDERA, WIMOWEH, HOLD ON, and THE HAMMER SONG, recorded with audience participation at Carnegie Hall, Yale, Chicago, and The Village Gate. Unfortunately, spacial limitations prevented including a representative amount of Pete's matchless spoken introductions (heard to full advantage on his previous concert recordings). An oddity: Big Bill Broonzy is heard joining Pete on MICHAEL ROW THE BOAT ASHORE; and Lightnin' Hopkins is heard on OH MARY DON'T YOU WEEP. For the benefit of the many record buyers for whom this will be their initial Seeger record, a complete Seeger discography on Folkways Records is included. (Reviewer: Karen Glover)

(HOPKINS cont. from page 48)

his professional appearances. The various tracks present many different facets of Lightnin's musicianship -- unlike virtually all other Lightnin' albums, which have maintained a single mood throughout. On three numbers, one of them a boogie instrumental, Lightnin' plays piano -- revealing what is, at least, a unique conception of boogie. On one of these, he plays both piano and guitar -- sometimes simultaneously. (The liner notes insist no dubbing; I don't know how he does it.) There is one jump blues, MIGHTY CRAZY, much less mechanical and musically more interesting than most Lightnin' recordings of this type. MISTER CHARLIE is an enchanting folk tale which proves Lightnin' a master storyteller -- though only music suffices for Lightnin's ending. The other three cuts are slow guitar blues which rank among the most intimate personal expressions Lightnin' has recorded. (One is the classic I'VE HAD MY FUN IF I DON'T GET WELL NO MORE.)

One minor objection: Candid has used a "live" studio for this disc, and there is reverberation, making it sound as if Lightnin' was singing in an auditorium -- which is obviously not the purpose of the disc. Considering the atrocious recordings to which blues fans have been forced to listen for so many years, this is hardly a crippling defect. The great intimacy of this album would have been enhanced much more, however, by the use of a "dead"



studio, to give more of the effect of the listener being right in the room with the performer. (Verve's BIG BILL BROONZY STORY achieves this very well.) Reverberation or not, this album will be a real treasure for anybody to whom the blues make an honest communication. Don't be scared away by the vivid cover photo or by the rather heady prose of the liner notes. This is easily one of the best albums that Lightnin' has ever made. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

The circumstances surrounding the third Hopkins album, LIGHTNIN' STRIKES AGAIN (Dart 8000), are puzzling. It was found by accident in a rack at a local record shop. It has never been advertised, and neither the record nor the cover has an address or other indication as to where the disc was pressed or issued.

About the 10 cuts contained in the album more is known: all are titles that originally appeared on Bill Quinn's Houston label, Gold Star. All are copyrighted in Quinn's name. These were the first records that Lightnin' soloed on; prior to them he was recorded with Thunder Smith, a piano player. The story goes that Lightnin' was discovered sitting on a curb in Houston by one of the singers working for Gold Star. The singer listened as Lightnin' played and sang; then took him to Quinn, who immediately signed him. Soon Lightnin' was outselling everyone else on the label.

WANTED TO BUY BY LSR: We are interested in buying or trading for the following records. Any information on where we could get them would be appreciated. If interested in selling, please quote your price and state how many copies of the record you have. Send us your want list.

WE WANT...WE WANT...WE WANT...WE WANT

STINSON ALBUMS: Folksay, Volume Six.  
Sonny Terry and his Mouth-harp.  
Gary Davis -- The Singing Reverend.  
Woody & Cisco: Cowboy Songs.  
Woody & Cisco: So. Mt. Hoedowns.  
Hally Wood: Texas Songs.  
Both albums by Harry & Jeanie West.

ELEKTRA 10" ALBUMS:

Jean Ritchie: JEAN RITCHIE (EKL-2)  
Ritchie, Brand: COURTING SONGS  
(EKL-22)  
Hally Wood: O LOVELY APPEARANCE OF  
DEATH (EKL-10)

BRUNSWICK 10" ALBUMS:

MOUNTAIN PROLIC and LISTEN TO OUR  
STORY

ALSO: An album (10" LP?) by Jean Ritchie and Tony Kraber called FOLKSONGS & BALLADS OF COLONIAL AMERICA, and any 78's by Hobart Smith & Texas Gladden or Woody Guthrie.

# SING OUT!

SING OUT! — the oldest regularly-published folk song magazine in America. Every issue contains between 12 and 15 folk songs, with melody line and guitar chords. Contributors include Ruth Rubin, John Greenway, A. L. Lloyd, Alan Lomax, Moses Asch, others.

Featured in each issue: Johnny Appleseed, Jr., by Pete Seeger, The Folk Process, The Git-Box, Folk Music On Records, Frets and Frails by Israel Young, etc. Edited by Irwin Silber.

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Included here are some of these early best sellers -- and it is obvious that they are early: Hopkins' guitar wasn't as sharp and agile then as it is now, and at times both lyrics and vocal tend to be a little artificial. Still, there are moments of startling insight and emotional power -- PENITENTARY BLUES is a good example. (Some of its same verses survived and were recorded by Charters for Folkways under the same title.) On some cuts Lightnin' is accompanied by an almost inaudible "knife" amplified guitar; on others by bass only. Also heard here is the original SHORT HAired WOMAN, which, with little advertising, sold between 40 and 50 thousand single copies. LIGHTNING BOOGIE is a highly interesting cut in which Lightnin' tap dances while seated, to his own guitar accompaniment.

Last but not least is the legendary TIM MOORE'S FARM -- a sometimes funny, sometimes tragic chronicle of the life of a field worker. This song, born in the fields of a Dallas landowner notorious for his mistreatment of his workers, may or may not have been written by Hopkins (who may or may not have worked there -- both versions have been printed). Whether or not Hopkins wrote it, the song is now completely his.

The important thing to remember about this album is that these sides were all recorded for a strictly Negro market; and

no thought, of course, was given to making them more palatable or understandable to city folk audiences, or the polite matrons who "just love the blues." Lightnin' has a tight, personal flow of communication with his audience -- they already know and understand the content of his songs, and want to hear the artist's manner of presenting and improvising upon them.

Although a real bargain at \$3.50, this enigmatic disc will prove very difficult to find; and I regret I cannot give an address where it can be obtained.

(Reviewer: Karen Glover)

JEANNIE ROBERTSON, "World's Greatest Folk Singer": SCOTTISH BALLADS AND FOLK SONGS (Prestige-International 13006)

Here is a disc that is the only currently available (in the U. S.) recording of one of the great balladeers in the English language; and a record that is far more pertinent as folk music than many of the subsequent numbers in the Prestige International series.

Apart from the sheer enjoyment of listening to the full-bodied singing heard here, a primary value of this record is the chance it gives us to compare the singing style of a tremendously good European ballad singer to the styles of those of our own singers who sing material similar to that of Mrs. Robertson's, and who are

equally good, or superior, stylists. (For the "World's Greatest Folk Singer" title is, of course, an absurdity; and the liner's blurbs quoted from British reviews -- "The finest ballad singing..nothing like it in the states." and "..There is no ballad singer to touch our Jeannie.." -- are know-nothing snobbery of the highest order.)

Compared to the singing of our Texas Gladden, Horton Barker, Emma Dusenberry, Jean Ritchie, Molly Jackson, or Maggie Gant, Mrs. Robertson's singing will seem especially grand -- much fuller and more expansive, warmer, and vibrant. It rises from deeper in the chest than the high, hard, and harsh-throated American style; and seems to bespeak a gentler, more socially adjusted cultural context, a less tense mental and emotional atmosphere. Her style as well as her songs are less hysterical and frustrated than ours -- though this, of course, doesn't affect the quality of artistry. It only points out the degree of difference in the culture that has given rise to the North-Central Scottish style, and the culture of our own Southern Uplands that has produced our most profound ballad style.

As with all great ballad singers, Mrs. Robertson's voice carries a message all of its own -- completely distinct from the message of the ballad's lyrics. One would not have to understand such a singer's language for the purposes of communication. I, in fact, found myself listening to Jeannie's singing in much the same manner that I listen to that of Texas Gladden.

After hearing a ballad sung a sufficient number of times so as to practically know the lyrics by heart, I often find myself completely ignoring the words, and listening with complete concentration to the singer's use of her voice. This is an especially rewarding experience with Mrs. Robertson. The ease with which she controls the varying texture of her voice, and colors the notes of the melody in a wide palette of aural tones is a rich experience; an esthetic confrontation that one can encounter nowhere in the world's arts but in the humble, unaccompanied singing of a folk balladeer.

Jeannie Robertson's repertoire is reportedly one of Scotland's finest; and from the few selections that can be squeezed onto an LP, it would seem to be highly inclusive and far-ranging in subject. The high-ballads, SON DAVID (Child #13) and JOHNNY THE BRINE (Child #114) caught my imagination most fully. Of special delight are the sexual songs, WI' MY ROVIN' EYE and A AUL' MAN CAM' COORTIN' ME -- displaying an erotic affirmation that is rare in America's Puritanical balladry and usually expurgated in the embarrassed Victorian printed collections of British folk song.

The inclusion of printed texts of the songs is a practise I would like to see Prestige continue.

The sound of the record, a quite noticeable hollowness and echoey quality, was not introduced artificially, but is the

unavoidable result (not explained on the record) of recording Jeannie in a large auditorium, during the off-moments of one of Scotland's folk music festivals. The hollowness of the sound damages but does not destroy the intimacy of listening to a solo voice.

By all means, if you are in the least interested in traditional ballad singing, the pinnacle of artistry in the folk music of any country, purchase this most excellent recording!

#### MANCE LIPSCOMB, TEXAS SHARECROPPER AND SONGSTER (Arhoolie F-1001)

The first release of Arhoolie Records, the outlet of the International Blues Record Club, presents a major discovery, a 65-year-old great-grandfather from the Brazos bottoms. The album's notes describe Lipscomb as "not properly a blues singer. He is more -- being of that generation when the blues were but one, unseparate stream in the vast flow of Negro tradition. From such a man you will hear ballads, breakdowns, reels, shouts, drags, jubilees, and blues ... if you describe the artist with accuracy, it will be with his own word: songster."

Blues comprise only about half the album -- a very diverse selection of them ranging from SEE SEE RIDER to recent R&B hits which Lipscomb has copied from

records and assimilated into his traditional style. There is a compelling sampling of the rest of his repertoire -- wonderful old songs like MAMA DON'T ALLOW, AIN'T GONNA RAIN NO MORE, ELLA SPEED, and FREDDIE (a captivating ballad of the Frankie & Johnny tale).

Mance is a lively great-grandfather indeed. His voice is not strong but he gets around with it, putting across the spirit of the lively songs and the message of the blues like a man half his age. All the songs are accompanied interestingly and at times brilliantly on guitar -- Mance's fingers are even younger than his voice. There are fine counter-melodies and all kinds of other tricks all the way through. He never gets tiresome (which is more than one can say for many better known guitarists). Judging from the cover photograph, all these wonderful sounds come from one of the humbler models of a large, commercial guitar manufacturer. It responds nicely to everything he does, including knife fretting.

The extensive notes by Mack McCormick add substantially to the album's value. Especially interesting are Lipscomb's comments on Leadbelly, Blind Lemon Jefferson, and other singers of the past and present. This is a prize album, of special interest to scholars and guitar players -- and of immense value as general

entertainment. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

EDITORS' NOTE: This record retails in stores for \$4.50 or from the IBRC as part of a one year membership. You will receive 3 LP's (NOT of your choice, as incorrectly reported in LSR #9) plus news letters and bulletins, etc., all for \$12. For single copies or full enrollment, write to International Blues Record Club, P. O. Box 671, Los Gatos, California.

TREASURES OF NORTH AMERICAN NEGRO MUSIC:  
LEROY CARR (Fontana tfe 17051)  
BLIND WILLIE JOHNSON (Fontana tfe 17052)  
VICTORIA SPIVEY (Fontana tfe 17264)

These British EP issues contrast acutely with the lowly state of the American "45." They come in elaborate folders graced with handsome photographs of primitive art and backed with extensive notes and texts (complete with rather curious inaccuracies). There is even an inside paper folder to protect the record. The price is appropriately fancy (about \$2) but for blues fans, they will be well worth the price of two R&R records each. #17051 presents four tracks available nowhere else by LeRoy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell, two of the best blues men going in their heyday in the early 1930's. Carr plays impeccable blues piano and Blackwell comments eloquently on guitar to his partner's singing. The Johnson disc contains his four most famous sides: DARK WAS THE NIGHT, NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE, IF I HAD MY WAY, and I'M GONNA RUN. These are all avail-

able on the Folkways Anthology and Johnson LP in this country, and require no comment here. Victoria Spivey was one of those formidable women who entertained the high-living, lawless inhabitants of Chicago's South Side in the 1920's. Her style is closer to the folk blues than is Bessie Smith's, and to hear her do BLOODTHIRSTY BLUES, DOPE HEAD BLUES, and the like is a thrilling experience. She is accompanied by Lonnie Johnson, who plays good unamplified guitar solidly in the blues tradition. These albums are outstanding examples of the attitude of European record companies toward a musical heritage that is ignored (or worse) by the very record companies who documented it right here in America. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

\* \* \* \* BOOK REVIEW \* \* \* \*

BELAFONTE -- An unauthorized biography by Arnold Shaw. Chilton Co., \$3.50. Paperback edition: Pyramid, 50¢.

The hard cover edition of this book was published several months ago. Now, through the magic of the paperback, it is available to the masses.

The indication that it is an "unauthorized" biography simply means the author got no information from the Great Man himself. He obtained his material from Belafonte's business associates, friends,

his first wife, and by copying a lot of already printed material. The result is more like an article from MODERN SCREEN than a serious literary work. Author Shaw writes in a Show Biz style that has him calling his hero "handsome Harry" and describing acting performances as "socko." Although female entertainers are mentioned frequently (everybody from Bessie Smith to Debbie Reynolds) we, luckily, are not given very many Shaw-style descriptions of their physical attributes. We do get two unfortunate examples when he refers to Monique Van Vooren as the "Belgian Bulge" and describes a CARMEN JONES love scene in which "Harry kisses Carmen's big toes."

Many folksingers are named in the book (Mr. Shaw seems to mention as many celebrities of all kinds as he possibly can) but there is very little of interest for the folklore student or even for the folknik. At one point, DOWN BEAT is quoted as saying, "His (handsome Harry's) roots are not in regional soil, as Richard Dyer-Bennet's (sic) are in Kentucky or Leadbelly's in Texas." No explanation is given as to what sort of roots Mr. Dyer-Bennet might have in Kentucky.

Another thought provoking episode occurs when Craig Work, an early Belafonte accompanist, enters Birdland with his guitar hidden under his coat. In a recent SING OUT article, Pete Seeger devoted an entire

article to various types of instrument cases. He wasted his time. All you have to do is stick that Dreadnought under your coat.

Mr. Shaw gives a great deal of space to racial injustice. He seems to be completely sincere about this. However, mainly because of his breezy writing style, his social comments fail to cut deeply.

There may be those who still want to read the life story of one of America's greatest folksingers. Those who do should pass BELAFONTE by and purchase BOUND FOR GLORY, the Woody Guthrie autobiography, and an important piece of American literature. (Reviewer: Jay Smith, Jacksonville.)

\* \* \* \* LETTERS TO THE EDITORS \* \* \* \*

#### A NOTE FROM THE LINCOLN BRIGADE.....

Gentlemen: Your review of SONGS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR has been called to our attention. Your review is excellent and we thank you for it. We write to clarify your puzzlement as to why it was re-issued by Folkways Records at this time. We originally signed an agreement with Asch in 1940 giving him permission to issue the 78rpm album with royalties coming to us. As you may already know, Asch went into bankruptcy at that time and Stinson simply pirated the masters and issued it as an LP. Repeated requests to Stinson to stop and desist -- or pay us the royalties

due -- were ignored. Both Mr. Seeger and ourselves then notified Stinson they were no longer authorized to put out the record and the right to re-issue was contracted with Folkways Records. The engineers of Folkways Records have done a truly remarkable job of cleaning up the surface scratch and the defects that were part of the old recording. We believe a comparison with the Stinson pirated copy will make this obvious. As to the price policy of Folkways Records, that is their prerogative. Do hope you will find space in one of your coming issues to let your audience know the above. Very truly yours,

M. Fishman

Executive Secretary

Veterans of the A. Lincoln  
Brigade

#### AN APPRECIATION FROM JOHN GREENWAY.....

Gentlemen: After reading your review of my record, THE CAT CAME BACK, I am constrained to paraphrase A. E. Housman's remark on another critic of your youth and competence and observe that criticism as practised by you is not a game, an exercise requiring skill and heed, like marbles or skittles or cats'-cradle, but a pastime, like leaning against a wall and spitting. Sincerely yours,

John Greenway

Boulder, Colorado

Editors' Note: No one could possibly have

more respect and admiration for Dr. Greenway as scholar, gentleman, and humorist than ourselves. Nevertheless, after hearing him sing on his record, THE CAT CAME BACK, we are constrained to paraphrase Melville's Ahab and observe that we'd strike the sun itself if it insulted us.

#### A RAMBLER IN GEORGIA.....

(Editors' Note: Mike Seeger and his little family have been traveling in Georgia recently, collecting music and locating old-time musicians. Mike dropped us this note concerning his search for Gid Tanner, leader of GID TANNER AND HIS SKILLET LICKERS, one of the most famous of the old-time string bands of the 1920's and 30's.)

Greetings from Dacula, Georgia!! When asked where one could find Gid Tanner, the chief of police at City Hall (a store-looking building with a Coca-Cola sign out front) said, "Go down the road to this church about a mile away; you'll find him there. He died about a year ago at the age of 76." Three of his sons play, though, and we hope to see them. Best regards,

Mike, Marj, and Kim Seeger

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READERS are cordially invited to contribute to the LETTERS TO THE EDITORS column. Additions, corrections, praise, criticism, news items, curiosity and contempt are equally welcome.

#### CHARLIE CODA'S RECORD SALE #1

Charlie Coda, the Twin Cities' greatest wheeler-and-dealer in jazz and folk records, presents a gala sale prepared exclusively for readers of LSR. These records are not review copies, complimentaries, or disc jockey copies -- all are from Charlie's private collection. Many of the rarer items Charlie offers are single copies, so the first order takes them away! Make checks and money orders payable to LSR.

#### OLD-TIME 78 rpm SINGLES.....

1. BRADLEY KINCAID: THE MINER'S SONG/RBD LIGHT AHEAD (Majestic) A hillbilly great! \$2.00.
2. DARBY & TARLTON: COLUMBUS STOCKADE/BIRMINGHAM JAIL (Columbia) Rare! \$2.50.
3. REV. KELSEY & CONG.: EVENING PRAYER/TELL ME HOW LONG (MGM 10303) Negro gospel. 75c
4. MACK ALLEN (Pseudonym of Vernon Dalhart): LONG AGO/THE MISSISSIPPI FLOOD SONG (Harmony 417-H) All-time country great! \$1.75
5. RILEY PUCKETT: RAILROAD BOOMER/VIOLETS (Bluebird) Guitarist of the Skillet-Lickers. A steal at \$1.50!
6. UNCLE JIM HAWKINS: HELL BROKE LOOSE IN GEORGIA/CAT CAME BACK (Challenge) Top! \$2.
7. KELLY HARRELL: MY HORSES AIN'T HUNGRY/HAND ME DOWN MY WALKING CANE (Victor) \$3.00
8. AL BERNARD: CASEY JONES/STEAMBOAT BILL (Brunswick 178) Fiddle, gtr, banjo! \$2.75



9. McFARLAND & GARDNER: BRIGHT SHERMAN VALLEY/EAST BOUND TRAIN (Brunswick 169) Mndoln, gtr, hillbilly vocal. \$1.25
10. C. POOLE & NO. CAROLINA RAMBLERS: WHITE HOUSE BLUES/MONKEY ON A STRING (Columbia 15099) Rim chip. Discount to \$1.

10" LP's (all unavailable elsewhere!)....

1. ERKIE LIEBERMAN: GOODBYE, MR. WAR (Amerecord 101) Extremely rare! \$4.00.
2. JIMMIE RODGERS: MEMORIAL Vol. 3 (RCA-Victor 3039) Original blue yodeler! \$2.50
3. JOSH WHITE: BALLADS & LUES Vol. 2 (Decca 5247) Edited by Alan Lomax. \$4.
4. FEGGY SEEGER, GUY CARAWAN: WE SING AMERICA (Nixa 19029) English record, unavailable in this country! Tops! \$3.00
5. JOSH WHITE: JOSH COMES A-VISITIN' (Period 1115) Contains Bonbons, Chocolates, and Chewing Gum. Josh at his best! \$3.25

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## ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER

Kingston Trio: GOIN' PLACES (Capitol 1564) Contains PASTURES OF PLENTY and THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND.

Jimmy Shand: STEP WE GAILY (Mercury MGF 203) "An Evening of Scottish Country Dancing" Features "folk" accordian.

Ronnie Gilbert: COME AND GO WITH ME (Vanguard 9052) Broad medley collection.

Kim Loy Wong: THE STEEL DRUMS OF KIM LOY WONG WITH THE UNIVERSITY SETTLEMENT STEEL BAND (Folkways 8367) Companion to Pete Seeger's how-to-do-it book on Trinidad steel drums.

Dave Van Ronk: VAN RONK SINGS (Folkways 2383) Greenwich Village idol sings blues.

Rosalie Sorrels: FOLKSONGS OF IDAHO AND UTAH (Folkways 5343) Up-and-coming Far Western lass sings a different collection of folk songs.

French RCA-Victor has just released a Tommy McClennon LP. That company also has records by Jazz Gillum, Washboard Sam, Big Maceo, Yancey, and Sonny Boy Williamson.

More blues: Mance Lipscomb (of Arhoolie Records) will soon hook on with a major company.

The Black Ace and Lil Son Jackson will have albums out on Arhoolie in about two weeks.

Will Holt and Dolly Jonah have an album out on the Atlantic label.

That's all for this month, folks!

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

CISCO HOUSTON: CISCO HOUSTON SINGS THE SONGS OF WOODY GUTHRIE (Vanguard 9089)

Cisco's last, and perhaps best, solo album is a heartfelt "personal tribute" to the friend he knew so well -- Woody Guthrie. This is Cisco's best in years.

BILL BROONZY: THE BILL BROONZY STORY (Verve MGV 3000) A 5-LP set.

Bill Randle records and annotates the "Last Sessions" of the great Chicago blues singer.

PETE SEEGER: CHAMPLAIN VALLEY SONGS (Folkways 5210)

A return to folk material (songs from the Marjorie L. Porter Collection of North Country Folklore) makes this Pete's most interesting in a long time.

FOLKSONGS FROM THE LOUISIANA ACADIANS (Louisiana Folklore Society LFS-A-4)

Harry Oster gives us a comprehensive survey of one of America's greatest (and least-known) folksong cultures.

THE FAMOUS CARTER FAMILY (Harmony 7280)

Although these sides do not present the Carter Family at their best, they are the only recordings of the original Carters (outside of the Folkways Anthology) available in this country. A real steal at \$1.98.

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# LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

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EDITED BY JON PANKAKE & PAUL NELSON

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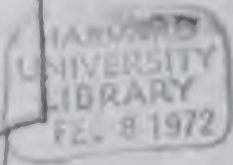
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THE LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW  
POETRY ROOM

On our cover this month is John Cohen, final third of the New Lost City Ramblers. John picks banjo and guitar, sings, takes photographs, and produces such outstanding phonograph records as MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY (Folkways 2317). He may be heard with the Ramblers on Folkways and Vanguard. Cover drawing by Jon Pankake.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

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*By Paul Nelson & Jon Pankake*

The biggest news this month is that there will soon be 13 more volumes of Alan Lomax's memorable 1959 field trip through America's South. The first seven appeared on Atlantic as THE SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES (HS 1 or 1346-1352). The next 13 will appear on a special Prestige International 25000 series. Included will be a whole LP of older, previously unreleased Texas Gladden material. Ken Goldstein also has an album by four traditional Virginia singers upcoming; one of the singers is Horton Barker. See the Prestige ads this issue for more record news ... Lomax has certainly been active these past weeks! He and Peter Kennedy have produced a definitive 5-volume set of traditional British folk music for Caedmon Records -- more information on that in this issue's advertisements ...

## \* \* \* RECORD REVIEWS \* \* \*

### IRISH AND BRITISH SONGS FROM THE OTTAWA VALLEY Sung by O. J. Abbott (Folkways 4051)

Eighty-five year old O. J. Abbott, of Hull, Quebec, a traditional ballad singer whose life story parallels the coming of British folk songs to the New World, is a major discovery of Canadian folklorist Edith Fowke. Mr. Abbott emigrated from Enfield, England, as a youth of 12 and spent his young manhood in the rough and tumble Irish communities of farmers and lumberjacks in Ontario, where he learned both his amazing bag of songs and graceful, simple singing style. His steady, tuneful voice would do justice to an artist fully thirty years younger, and the gentleness and modesty of his performing will undoubtedly be easier for many non-scholarly American listeners to take than the more passionate and intricately decorated singing of many of the United States' ballad singers.

Most of Mr. Abbott's songs were learned sixty and seventy years ago from singers who were then already very old, and are probably not more than twice or three times removed from the printed street songsheets ("Broadsides") of early America that are the sources of many of ours and Canada's folksongs -- a remarkable example of preservation which allows us an invaluable peek at an important and pure aspect of musical tradition on this continent.

Even more important, from the standpoint of this magazine and its readers, is the fact that these beautiful and rare (some of Mr. Abbott's songs have apparently never been collected before) songs with their well-defined melodies and full, complete texts appear here for our benefit performed as they were when folksong was an integral part of the entertainment and expression of Americans. How much, if we but listen, such a performance has to tell us of the sweetness of Mr. Abbott himself, and of the character of the heritage we share (however indirectly) with him! Many thanks to O. J. Abbott and Edith Fowke for a delightful documentary recording.

### THREE FROM ARHOOLIE.....

When Sam Charters wrote his book, *THE COUNTRY BLUES*, in 1959, it was generally conceded that the era of genuine traditional blues recording was over. Such has not turned out to be the case -- the well that looked very dry in 1959 is a veritable geyser in 1961. This year will probably see more traditional blues released than any single year at any time in the past.

One of the leaders in the blues renaissance is Arhoolie Records, the project of the California collector Chris Strachwitz, who does most of his recording in Texas and Mississippi. Two of his three new releases feature Texas singers, both of them very well known at one time and now brought out of retirement by the enter-

prising Strachwitz. The third LP is an Arhoolie sampler.

The Black Ace (*THE BLACK ACE*, Arhoolie F-1003) had his heyday in the late 1930's, but unfortunately for posterity, it was on the dimly remembered medium of live radio that he gained his fame -- not on records. He plays a non-electric steel guitar shaped like a conventional guitar and held flat in his lap. The strings are strung well away from the fingerboard and are fretted with a medicine bottle grasped by the thumb and forefinger of his left hand. The instrument is tuned in various open tunings.

The Black Ace (born Babe Karo Lemon Turner) sings straightforwardly in a rather deep voice which resembles Blind Boy Fuller a little, but which has mellowed with age. His guitar playing sometimes resembles Blind Lemon Jefferson's in sound, but has a more consistent, rhythmic feeling. He has a tendency to accompany several different songs in exactly the same way, giving the LP a slight quality of monotony. He has originated just about all of the 12 blues on the set himself -- the songs with familiar titles are different from anything other singers do under those same titles. *GOLDEN SLIPPER* is not the old gospel tune, but a blues commemorating a saloon by that name. One hymn, *FARTHER ALONG*, is included.

The Black Ace can be quite moving, but

his singing has very little variety from one cut to the next, and for best results should be listened to a little -- say, half a side -- at a time.

LIL' SON JACKSON (Arhoolie F-1004) features a more recent Texas blues man. He was the No. 2 blues artist of Gold Star Records in the late 1940's. (A certain L. Hopkins was No. 1.) He went on to a successful career for Imperial Records of California in the early 1950's, singing some city blues and some commercialized country material. He has now become an auto mechanic.

Jackson is here recorded with a conventional, unamplified guitar. He represents on this record a very well-developed form of traditional country blues. Stylistically, he is much more complex than The Black Ace -- and listeners will generally find him a good deal more enjoyable. He has a high, plaintive voice and a complex style of vocal ornamentation, combining ancient blues inflections with a few syncopations from the city. His guitar accompaniment is rich and driving; he favors medium-fast tempos. He is capable of a lot of emotion -- much more than on his commercial discs. He sings his own originals, but also gives beautiful performances of traditional numbers like TICKET AGENT and LOUISE. Though he has a whole LP to expand and spread out,

Jackson instinctively keeps close to the two-and-a-quarter-minute format of the modern blues single. This induces a compactness of expression which adds considerably to the total effect. Jackson does not serve too well to provide half-ignored noise in a corner of a room, but he can bear good, close listening.

BLUES 'N' TROUBLE (Arhoolie FS-101) is unlike conventional samplers in that it contains tunes NOT included on the individual LP's it demonstrates. Strachwitz frankly confesses that these are not the best work of the respective artists -- he has considerably saved this for their individual LP's.

Aside from representative samples of the artists of the first four Arhoolies (Lipscomb, Williams, Black Ace, Jackson), we have here a prize 1949 recording by Lowell Fulson, a tense, brilliant singer who was often considered the equal of Lightnin' Hopkins before he went commercial in the 1950's; a driving blues in real old-time piano style by Jasper Love; a rollicking ONE THIN DIME by the fabulous Butch Cage and Willie Thomas; a mean 1920's city blues by Sam Chatman (who sounds like an angry Lonnie Johnson); a fast piano blues by Whistling Alex Moore; an infectious fast guitar blues by an important young singer, Robert Curtis Smith, from Clarksdale, Miss. (the country blues capital of the world); and a number by Mercy Dee (who wrote ONE ROOM COUNTRY SHACK) done in current Chicago style.

The program is well arranged and enjoyable all the way through -- we wait eagerly for the LP's by Mercy Dee and Alex Moore, and for the GOIN' TO CALIFORNIA LP containing Fulson, and the DELTA BLUES disc with Smith, Chatman, Cage & Thomas, and others. Arhoolie records, it should be mentioned once again, are rarely seen in stores, but are readily available for \$5 @ from Mr. Strachwitz at Box 671, Los Gatos, Calif. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JOSH WHITE: SPIRITUALS AND BLUES (Elektra 193)  
JOSH WHITE: THE HOUSE I LIVE IN (Elektra 203)

The notes on these releases are more fun than are the records. Nat Hentoff, who in his long career has written some of the best and some of the worst notes ever, depending on who has hired him, has managed to do a clever job of picturing White as a folksinger without actually resorting to absolute falsehood.

The records themselves are just more Josh White; there are no real surprises on either disc. Just the incessant (aphrodisiac to his followers) a-yumph of his guitar, and the arrogant blandness of his voice. EKL 193 presents "the unadorned Josh White", therefore a bass, drums, and a tenor sax must have become integral parts of this remarkable man. The spiritual side of this disc presents White at his worst. There can scarcely be any objection to

spirituals with a blues-derived style (viz. Blind Gary Davis), but White's irritated, catty, and totally superficial performances of the fast numbers are in the most execrable taste by any standards. THE HOUSE I LIVE IN consists of old White chestnuts such as THE MAN WHO COULDN'T WALK AROUND, JOHNNY HAS GONE FOR A SOLDIER, T.B. BLUES, and so on, warmed over for stereo. They sound about as good as ever, but the expansive surfaces of the LP have moved Josh to take four and a half minutes to say what he used to say quite well in two and a half. Happy nightclubbing! (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

CURTIS JONES: TROUBLE BLUES (Prestige-Bluesville 1022)

This, I suppose, is about the last of the "old" Bluesvilles featuring city blues with combos. It is one of the better ones. Jones is a topnotch city singer and a better-than-average pianist. He sings lowdown, honest blues without affectation, receiving very sympathetic support on electric guitar from "Moose John" Walker. However, the rhythm section (the Bluesville regulars) is its usual pussyfooting self, and that confounded organ keeps getting in the way. As a result, this album (like the other Bluesvilles with combos) won't satisfy anybody completely. Jones is a good man, however, and we hope

that he and Walker can record again with more sympathetic sidemen. The notes here have several typographical errors, one of which refers to GOOD WOMAN BLUES as GOD WOMAN BLUES. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

WALT CONLEY: PASSIN' THROUGH WITH WALT CONLEY (Premiere 6101)

Conley, a professional "folk" singer working out of Denver, is quoted on this, his first solo LP, as saying, "I'm worried about the current trend among folk artists to 'sing pretty.' My own feeling is that above all a folk singer must have heart..." Miles and miles of it, one presumes. Mr. Conley, who claims to draw inspiration from Josh White, the Tarriers, and Bob Gibson, "men in whom ability and integrity have achieved a perfect union," has set a difficult task for himself. Since he insists upon singing in the same Malibu Beach folk style affected by most Far Western folkniks from the K-Trio on down (or up), he is extremely hard pressed not to sound pretty. Thus he painfully twists his voice and over dramatizes the lyrics until his rendition of I NEVER WILL MARRY sounds like Westbrook Van Voorhis narrating a particularly significant episode of The March Of Time. Conley's idea of "heart" seems to consist of whipping himself into a frenzy (as on WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON and TAKE THIS HAMMER) and producing an ex-

hibition containing fully as much phony passion and jellybellied virility as the most vulgar professional wrestling match. However, the folknik composition called THE KLAN, dripping with gory imagery straight from the horror comic books and screamed hysterically by Conley, is worth a hearty laugh. Since this record, a local Denver effort, will have a minuscule distribution and even less advertising, it will be neither seen nor heard by hardly anyone. Isn't that sad? Who says there isn't any justice anymore? (Reviewer: Edmund Gilbertson)

OTIS SPANN IS THE BLUES (Candid 8001)

Candid has taken a cue from Prestige and has discovered itself a couple of blues men. Otis Spann plays piano for Muddy Waters, and here has his own first album on which he sings as well as plays. Also featured is Robert Lockwood Jr, a classic blues veteran who plays electric guitar and shares the singing. Candid has removed the electric harmonicas, bass, & drums that normally are heard with these men and told them to sing the real stuff. And they oblige with some fine blues -- lowdown, honest, virile, and strong (though it does sound a wee bit "cleaned up"). The singing is very good, though not the greatest. Lockwood is very capable about bringing out the special virtues of his electric instrument. Spann is an accomplished pianist -- particularly in a solo



called OTIS IN THE DARK. There is a lot of good blues on the record. Throw away the jacket, however -- the notes (by one of the better jazz writers, Nat Hentoff) unfortunately amplify the pretentious attitude indicated by the album title, and the whole thing lacks the good taste Prestige uses on its Bluesville albums. Incidentally, Spann and Lockwood have kept up the old tradition of writing all the old classics of the blues especially for this album. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

**FRANK WARNER: SONGS OF THE CIVIL WAR**  
(Prestige-International 13012)

The patriotic, military, political, and sentimental songs of the Civil War, most of which were composed by the popular songwriters of the day and which subsequently have not had the advantage of generations and generations of polish by the anonymous voices of America, have (unless performed by a superb singer who can lend his or her own personal creative magic to the song) generally left this reviewer uncomfortably aware of their stiffness and mustiness at the expense of any historical or artistic merit they may possess. Prestige's advertising for this album of Civil War songs says that Civil War experts consider it the best such record ever made. I don't know on what basis these experts have made such a judgement, but I would wholeheartedly agree with their opinion for this reason:

# SING OUT!

SING OUT! — the oldest regularly-published folk song magazine in America. Every issue contains between 12 and 15 folk songs, with melody line and guitar chords. Contributors include Ruth Rubin, John Greenway, A. L. Lloyd, Alan Lomax, Moses Asch, others.

Featured in each issue: Johnny Appleseed, Jr., by Pete Seeger, The Folk Process, The Git-Box, Folk Music On Records, Frets and Frails by Israel Young, etc. Edited by Irwin Silber.

*The Folk Song Magazine*

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Announcing .. 5 new records from CAEDMON

THE FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN

Edited by Peter Kennedy and Alan Lomax



This collection was begun in 1950 by Alan Lomax, a past head of the Archive of American Folk Song in the Library of Congress, and Peter Kennedy, who had already done work of first importance in the collecting and teaching of English folk dances. These 5 CAEDMON volumes are samplings of their best material. Here, for the first time, is the full range of British folksongs as performed by authentic folk singers and recorded in pubs and country cottages in isolated sections of the island. Some of the singers are old, others conform to ancient singing styles which may surprise you; yet their performances make folk song live in all of its subtleties. Print and musical notation cannot convey the flavor of the music. Professional singers bury its charm and nuances under the weight of their training. Only by listening to traditional country singers like those on these CAEDMON records can you properly understand and appreciate these ballads of the British people.

More details in Caedmon's ad on page 27.

the songs are sung by Frank Warner, a singer who, unlike most other educated and urbanized performers, is neither too embarrassed, timid, or ignorant to lose himself in the songs; to convey them to us in the abandon and spirit that is an integral part of them, in fact their very lifeblood and heartbeat.

Warner, a native of Alabama, is to be commended for rendering the side of Yankee songs (most of which here are little-known and difficult numbers compared to the obvious and popular charm of the Rebel tunes) in only slightly less terrific fashion than the side of Rebel songs -- for DIXIE, BONNIE BLUE FLAG, LORENA, and especially THE OLD REBEL SOLDIER (THE UNRECONSTRUCTED REBEL) which Frank exuberantly yells out as though he believed every word, are clearly the best cuts on the record. Warner's sons, Jeff and Gerrett, contribute some nice atmosphere on the choruses of the marching songs and provide the type of simple, unobtrusive accompaniment (on banjo and guitar here) appropriate for a singer like Warner, whose voice can do it all. Granted one or two slow spots, a collection of both well-known and obscure material given delightful validity by a performer who is unjustly not heard often enough these days.

(Reviewer: Karen Glover)

ROLF CAHN & ERIC VON SCHMIDT  
(Folkways 2417)

This set brings together the well-traveled, versatile professional Rolf Cahn, and a "bearded madman" named Eric von Schmidt, who, besides being an artist and film-maker, has built himself a reputation as one of the country's finest white blues men. Schmidt's reputation should be greatly enhanced by this set, which is a solid program of familiar material leaning towards the blues.

Schmidt has a wild, almost Presleian voice, and knows how to use it to turn out exciting blues. His singing does not really sound like a Negro's (what white man's does?), but Schmidt has a real command of what might be called the traditional Negro musical spirit -- much better than that evidenced by some well-known Negro singers. He does a fascinating GRIZZLY BEAR, a beautiful WASN'T THAT A MIGHTY STORM in his own engrossing adaptation of Blind Willie Johnson style, and a fine recreation of Leadbelly's FRANKIE & ALBERT. In fact, Schmidt completely out-classes Cahn as a blues singer: the latter was regrettably allowed to sing half the songs on this record. It is not a matter of Cahn's voice being "bad" in pitch or tonal quality, as has been suggested. The trouble is that he tries to do too much with his voice in the way of overdone

emotionalizing, and winds up sounding rather like an off-key Casey Anderson. He has thoroughly proved his talent at singing ballads and foreign songs on previous records, but on these blues his singing rarely rises above third-rate coffeehouse level. His quasi-operatic COLUMBUS STOCKADE is a real bomb.

Instrumentally, the two guitarists complement each other marvelously, and produce between them some of the most exciting blues playing ever recorded by white men. (A brief description of the similarities and differences between the guitar styles of the two men is in the notes). A good release -- von Schmidt is definitely a man to watch. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

BILL MONROE: MR. BLUEGRASS (Decca 4080)

The rather literary complexion of the city folk music "boom" seems quite obvious. Recognized traditional material, say a song like BARBARA ALLEN, can be presented in any musical style from operatic to jazz; by anyone from Dyer-Bennet to Sophie Tucker. It can even be presented completely devoid of any musical style (i.e. the droning, "straightforward" city-billies). Yet it will elicit from someone, somewhere, the comment, "Gee, that's great. I love folk music." Conversely, when actual rural musicians perform pop songs in the only modern musical style that has directly evolved from tradition (I am referring here to Anglo-American music, of course),

they are not only deprived of their due as folk musicians, but are actually sneered at as "low-brow" and "vulgar". A truly paradoxical situation to those who understand the relation of PERFORMING STYLE to folk music as cultural expression.

An encouraging sign of the education of the city audience for folk music is the acceptance of Flatt and Scruggs and, more recently, The Stanley Brothers by the folknik consumer market. Both groups are now welcome at folk music festivals, city TV programs, and New York City concerts -- they have escaped the taboo label of "Hillbilly" or "Country-Western" and are regarded now as honest-to-gosh folk musicians. Bill Monroe has, unfortunately, not yet been accorded this acceptance. All we can say is that if folkniks think they made a real find when they "discovered" Earl Scruggs, wait until they discover Bill Monroe!

The complexity and brilliancy of Monroe's singing style and its legitimacy as folk music has been described by Mike Seeger (SING OUT! Feb.-March 1961) with much more understanding than LSR could attempt. Suffice it to say that we feel that Bill's singing of even the most insignificant twaddle is more thrilling and moving than any Child ballad ever crooned by a city folknik. And is better folk music.

Monroe's newest LP, MR. BLUEGRASS, contains a list of titles selected from Monroe juke box hits of the last few years: TIME CHANGES EVERYTHING, PUT MY RUBBER DOLL

topic

Records are now being represented by Mr. Moses Asch, Folkways Records, N.Y. Inquire now.



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In the future months, Prestige International will present albums by such outstanding folk performers as Rosalie Sorrels, Tommy Hunter (mountain string band), Tossi Aaron, Fiddler Beers, the Seeger sisters, the Gardners, Roger Abrahams, Tony Saletan, Ray Conrad, Harry & Jeanie West, Isla Cameron, MacColl & Lloyd, Charlotte Daniels & Pat Webb, Bruce Phillips, and many others -- as well as more of such artists as Obray Ramsey, Bonnie Dobson, Jack Elliott, etc. Prestige Bluesville will feature among others, records by Furry Lewis, Pink Anderson, Tampa Red, Memphis Slim, Sidney Golden, Mercy Dee, Snooks Eaglin, Scrapper Blackwell, J. D. Short, Henry Townsend, and THE LAST SESSIONS OF BLIND WILLIE McTELL. Also repeats by Gary Davis, Lightnin' Hopkins, Berry & McGhee, and many others. For catalogs, write: PRESTIGE RECORDS, 203 So. Washington, Bergenfield, New Jersey.



## New folk

RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT, of late of NEWSWEEK and THE NEW YORK TIMES, will soon have an album for us entitled JACK ELLIOTT SINGS WOODY GUTHRIE'S "SONGS TO GROW ON." Watch for it. Folkways Records, 117 West 46th St., New York 36, N. Y.

AWAY (no connection with French eroticism), FLOWERS OF LOVE, etc. As with all music created solely for commercial purposes, these songs have no value as poetry or art of a literary nature. Many of them can fairly be described as cretinous. Musically, however, they are well worth study -- both for Monroe's vocal styling and for the bluegrass orchestrations. One traditional number, LONESOME ROAD BLUES, is a genuine treat.

City folk record collectors who want to hear Monroe working out on a selection of old-time and traditional songs are advised to purchase I SAW THE LIGHT (Decca 8769), which, for material as well as for singing, is his greatest folk LP. On it, Monroe sings such hymns as I AM A PILGRIM, WAYFARING STRANGER, LIFE IS LIKE A MOUNTAIN RAILWAY, and PRECIOUS MEMORIES in stunning and genuinely moving fashion, backed by a vocal quartet and accompanied only by his mandolin and one guitar (an organ sneaks in for one number or so, but ignore it and it will go away). This is not a bluegrass album -- the emphasis is on the singing of old-time hymns, and instrumental breaks are few and brief. A complete discussion of the record will appear in a future LSR as a "record classic".

THE BARRELHOUSE BLUES OF SPECKLED RED (Folkways 3555) Recorded in Denmark.

Speckled Red (Rufus Perryman) is a 68-

year-old Georgia-born Negro piano player and singer who became very famous in 1929 with his record of a catchy boogie piece called THE DIRTY DOZENS. Because of this and other boogie discs, he is usually spoken of as a boogie pianist, but his talent extends to a great variety of styles, encompassing just about all the forms that were taken by Negro city blues in the first quarter of the present century. This set contains a wide range of these styles, with some late-20's pop tunes in standard piano-rolly style thrown in for good measure. The set's titles range from HOW LONG BLUES to IF I COULD BE WITH YOU ONE HOUR TONIGHT, with COW-COW BLUES, TAIN'T NOBODY'S BUSINESS IF I DO, BABY WON'T YOU PLEASE COME HOME, IT FEELS SO GOOD, and PINETOP'S BOOGIE WOOGIE popping up along the way.

The performances are authentic to the last note, and quite interesting. They are, however, lacking in intensity and drive, and suffer from poor timing in many places. Much of this is undoubtedly due simply to the performer's age (what do we expect from a man in his late sixties?), but it is easy to see in this set the symptoms common to old blues and jazz men who, after years of obscurity, are trotted out and exhibited to adoring white audiences -- especially in Europe. (Big Bill Broonzy is the most notable example). Speckled Red is careful to stick to authentic material and authentic styles of performance, but he (perhaps unconsciously, perhaps deliberately) softens the "hard" sounds

(Continued page 29..)

### BOB GIBSON: YES I SEE (Elektra 197)

Most LSR readers will remember Bob Gibson's first Riverside records (now, alas, out-of-print) of four years ago or so. On them, Gibson demonstrated a fresh repertoire of lighthearted, reasonably traditional tunes sung in a genuinely pleasing, entertaining, and tasteful manner -- and considerable charm and skill as an audience song-leader.

Now, his voice having recovered from the hoarseness that plagued it last year, Gibson offers a new album seemingly less frivolous and gay than were his earlier discs. The liner notes quote him as saying, "If in some way I can lead a few of them (young people) back toward the roots of this music, to recognizing the work of Big Bill, Woody Guthrie, and Leadbelly, I'll feel a mission accomplished."

Upon examination of this collection of mostly blues-like and gospel-like numbers, one must assume that Gibson believes (or has been led to believe) that profundity consists of (1) abandoning his banjo (only one banjo accompaniment here) in favor of a 12-string guitar thrummed furiously in the Odetta manner (2) utilizing the relative minor in almost every song whether the number calls for it or not (including JOHN HENRY, which

ordinarily does not) (3) performing with the assistance of 7 sidemen who play, among other things, jazz guitar, piano, & bongo drums (4) accepting vocal support from a group called "The Gospel Pearls", who contribute "Doo-ee-oops" to the rhythm numbers and go "Ahhhh-ahhhh-ahhh" on the more dramatic tunes. It is difficult to see how Gibson expects to accomplish his avowed intention of leading his listeners back to Big Bill and Woody since the majority of songs on the disc are Gibson originals -- some of which, granted, have a nice swing to them (WELL, WELL, WELL and YOU CAN TELL THE WORLD), and some of which are dismally folknik in character (DADDY ROLL 'EM and WHEN THE SUN COMES UP IN THE MORNING).

All this adds up to an album which, like all Gibson efforts, is not without a good deal of value as entertainment, but which is just too unnecessarily raucous. Gibson is too talented a performer to have to hide behind a lot of extraneous noise, as he is doing here. As for the young people, it would be commendable if any of them are led back to Woody, Big Bill, and Leadbelly by this album -- but they will certainly have taken the long way around.

A GREAT LINEUP of records will be discussed in LSR # 17 -- including offerings by the McPeake Family, Bonnie Dobson, Robin Roberts, Aunt Molly Jackson, Guy Carawan, and British field recordings from Alan Lomax.

## THE FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN

Edited by Peter Kennedy and Alan Lomax

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PR-INT 13016 JACK ELLIOTT SINGS THE SONGS OF WOODY GUTHRIE: Hard Travelling, Grand Coulee Dam, New York Town, Tom Joad, Howdido, Talking Dust Bowl, This Land is Your Land, Pretty Boy Floyd, Philadelphia Lawyer, Talking Columbia, Dust Storm Disaster, Riding in My Car, 1913 Massacre, So Long. Guitar, harmonica acc.

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THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW.

"Jack Elliott sounds more like me than I do." Woody Guthrie.

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PRESTIGE INTERNATIONAL folk music series is produced and edited by the noted folklorist Kenneth S. Goldstein.

(Cont. from page 24....)

in the music -- those very sounds which make it distinctly Negro music -- and makes it generally more "respectable", thus defeating for many listeners (including this reviewer) the very purpose for which he is careful to stick to "authentic" numbers. The set is historically very valuable, and entertaining the first couple of times through -- but it is unexciting and does not wear well at all. The Danish recording is quite good; Sam Charters has provided a commendable booklet; and Folkways has another of its famous architectural motifs on the cover. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JACK ELLIOTT SINGS THE SONGS OF WOODY GUTHRIE (Prestige International 13016)

Those of us who have been zipping money orders over to England for all the latest Jack Elliott records (on Topic, 77, Eng. Columbia, and Collector) can now sit back, relax, and take it easy for a while: Jack has "arrived" in the United States. In this, his first American album, he gives us the greatest batch of Guthrie songs, bar none, since Woody himself was forced to hang up his guitar. All this will come as no surprise to Elliott aficionados. And to those who haven't heard him yet, LSR predicts that Jack will very shortly become the most popular of all the city folksingers. The national press for July and August would seem to bear us out: in the July 25 issue of THE NEW YORK TIMES,

Robert Shelton (a good folk music critic) devotes eight paragraphs plus a picture to Jack; the August 14 NEWSWEEK gives Elliott nearly the whole music page (again plus a photo -- one which makes Jack look like a young Chill Wills), and Alan Lomax is quoted as saying, "I'd rather listen to Jack than any of the other young people;" another noted folk music critic calls the Elliott album "the best record by a city singer since the New Lost City Ramblers arrived on the scene;" John Greenway has said, "Jack Elliott has accomplished...a refinement of Guthrie's singing and playing style, an amalgamation of Woody's genius and his own genuine talents into a compound better than either alone;" Israel Young commented on an Elliott concert, "He gave a freshness to songs which are considered 'standard'...His set of Woody Guthrie songs was so moving and authentic that Marge Guthrie was seen crying and she wasn't the only one. People say I never applaud at folk concerts. They're wrong. I became part of a wall of applause that just wouldn't let him go..." And Woody himself has said, with, what one would imagine, a twinkle in his eye, "Jack Elliott sounds more like me than I do!" Rarely, if ever, has an American folksinger -- especially such a good one -- received so much popular and critical acclaim. Jack is in the enviable position of pleasing both the critics, scholars, and the public.

Does he really deserve all this to-do?  
Is he really that good? Or is he merely

a carbon copy, a caricature, of Woody with no real talent of his own? These are all natural questions to ask about the man that has stirred up such a fuss in the folk world. As for myself, I think he deserves all the praise that he gets.

This record contains ample evidence that Elliott is no longer a MERE IMITATOR of Guthrie. (Jack frankly admits that he once was.) The songs here are now Jack's own and he sings them in a wonderful Okie old-timey style that borrows freely from Woody but manages to be a whole lot more Elliott than anything else. Whereas once Jack would have slaved religiously to capture each Guthrie nuance, he now rolls along like the happy river Henry Miller describes in his books -- he is his own man now, and the results show up delightfully in his singing. Gone is all the rigidity and stiffness of some of his Topic recordings. He now plays and sings as if he owned the whole world. His repertoire has similarly expanded to include blues, music hall, vaudeville, cowboy songs, and imitations of Leadbelly, Gary Davis, Blind Lemon, Jimmie Rodgers, Richard Dyer-Bennet, Hank Williams, and Elvis Presley.

Jack's great gift in folk music (aside from his ability as an entertainer) shows up plainly on this, his best record. He can take a style -- in this case Guthrie's -- and completely assimilate it into his own,

remaining true to both. You hear? Jack of both Guthrie and Elliott in Jack's singing that it often does, as Greenway points out in his excellent liner notes (which are practically worth the price of the record alone), turn out to be a "compound better than either alone." This is not to say that Elliott is a better folksinger than Woody Guthrie. This IS to say that Jack is a superb folksinger who, as Alan Lomax has said, "has completely absorbed the style and mannerisms of the field singer," but who now projects an image that is simply his own. He has formed a distinct and unique personality which seems to give everything he sings a ringing Elliott flavor. If you like this, you are liable to develop a passionate fondness for Jack's records to the point of sending overseas to get all his earlier ones. If you do not like Jack, you are quite likely to feel that he is too broad, too showy, too vaudevillian. Most people, I feel, are going to like Jack a whole lot. Give a listen to NEW YORK TOWN, PRETTY BOY FLOYD, TALKING COLUMBIA, TALKING DUST BOWL, CAR CAR SONG, or practically anything else on this record. Listen to TOM JOAD and see if you don't think Elliott is doing full justice to it. Or put Jack to the real test and play THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND and see if you don't agree with Izzy Young about Jack bringing a certain "freshness" to what is probably Woody's greatest song.

The version on this album is by far the best of any city singer I have ever heard. Listen to Jack's magnificent guitar playing and then re-read Greenway's notes on how Jack has expanded and extended the Guthrie style of picking to its finest and most logical artistic limits. But best of all is the SPIRIT in which Jack sings these songs -- it is the same spirit in which they were originally written and sung. It is an incarnation of the Guthrie vision of America (and Woody is a great symbol, an archetype, of Americanism) merging with a daring, understanding, tremendously mature new talent. Jack seems to have the gift of greatness. He makes use of it here to give us one of the most outstanding city albums in recent years. We shall certainly enjoy hearing much more from him in the future.

\*\*\*\*\* BOOK REVIEWS \*\*\*\*\*

AMERICAN FAVORITE BALLADS AS SUNG BY PETE SEEGER By Pete Seeger. 96 pages. Cloth \$3.95; paper \$1.95. Oak publications.

Breathes there an LSR reader under thirty years of age who has not become involved directly or indirectly with folk music through the influence of Pete? Probably not. If Leadbelly and Woody Guthrie, through the efforts of the Lomaxes, were the men who brought the music of the country man and the working man to the city, then Pete is the man who has brought the city audiences to Woody and Leadbelly.

This modest little volume is a continuation of Pete's work and vision; a personal project with Pete's mark indelibly imprinted on every page. Like Pete himself, the book is practical rather than scholarly, direct rather than theoretical, inspiring, musically very simple (letting the songs speak for themselves), and good-naturedly enjoyable. The songs are all from Pete's many great records, and LSR readers certainly don't need a run-down on them by title. Pete, with his usual respect for tradition, has carefully avoided any copyright controversy by crediting all but those songs whose authorship (or very drastic rearrangement) is known simply to "traditional." One small fault one might find with the book is the lack of a brief bibliography which would direct the more curious and inquiring reader to some of the better general folk song books in the field. But mayhap this is quibbling. Suffice it to say that many, many young people will undoubtedly experience the thrill of bringing a song to life from the dead print of a page for the first time with this book. One can only hope that its readers present and future, intoxicated with the glow of discovery of a simple, personal, meaningful art fully within their grasp, will have as much enjoyment using the book as Pete obviously had writing it. For I'm sure Pete would agree with John Greenway that, through such works as this book, "another generation of Americans is learning that the best recreation is still creative." E. G.

(EDITORS' COLUMN cont. from page 21...)

... The folkum group personnel-shuffling farce continues as Reynolds and Shane add John Stewart, formerly of the Cumberland Three, to the Kingston Trio -- replacing Dave Guard who will form his own group ... Contact "The Friends of Pete Seeger" at Rm. 602, 200 W. 57 St., N. Y. C. 19; and lend whatever support you can -- spiritual or material -- to Pete as he awaits the hearing of his appeal this fall ... SEEN IN THE TWIN CITIES RECENTLY: Folk music attempted in a fine arts context by Fiddler and Mrs. Beers at U of Minn; a parade of folkniks in the nite spots (Judy Collins, Don Crawford, The Tarriers, Walt Conley); and, topping everything, a great series of shows by Grandpa Jones and his wife, Ramona (a top notch country fiddler), at a juke-joint dance hall called (honest!) Steverino's Hitching Post ... The first annual Detroit Northland Folk Music Festival, coming Sept. 22-24 at the Northland Playhouse, Detroit, has a fascinating lineup of talent. Featured are: Ewan MacColl, Jean Ritchie, John Lee Hooker, Jimmy Driftwood, Guy Carawan, Peggy Seeger, The Country Gentlemen, Bonnie Dobson, Memphis Slim, and The College All Stars (rah, rah) consisting of one singer from the campus of each of the major colleges. Exec. producer is Paul Endicott, from whom information about the festival may be obtained...

How many eagle-eyed LSR readers spotted Frank Hamilton doing a bit part in the M-G-M "beatnik" movie, THE SUBTERRANEANS? ... Wool Gathering Department: Wouldn't it be fun to hear Lonnie Johnson and Peggy Lee singing pop-blues ballads together? And how about a duet featuring Judy Garland and Bill Monroe? ... NOTES FROM THE LSR MAILBAG -- Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger, and A. L. Lloyd are planning their own folk music club in London; Folkways Records is now the American representative of England's TOPIC label, which has a really worthwhile catalogue of both British and American folk discs; Coming in early September from The Southern Illinois University Press is a book entitled THE CRITICS AND THE BALLAD: READINGS SELECTED AND EDITED BY MacEDWARD LEACH AND TRISTRAM P. COFFIN ... Wedgeley Todd, having completed a fabulous stand of clubs and coffee houses in the St. Louis area, is now busking thru Arkansas collecting banjo tunes and old-time songs firsthand ... Twin Cities area folk fans interested in The Folk Song Society of Minnesota can contact the organization at its new address: 3218 4th St. SE, Minneapolis 14 ... Watch for REALLY! THE COUNTRY BLUES, an anthology of country blues singers, to be released by Origin Jazz Library about August 19th or thereabouts ... Thrill your friends, dismay your enemies by giving them subscriptions to LSR. Price is still an existentially absurd \$3 a year. THE EDITORS

#### ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER

- Frances Archer & Beverly Gile: INTERNATIONAL SONGS AND BALLADS (ST/And 408)  
 Ray Boguslav: CURFEW SHALL NOT RING TONIGHT! (Monitor 359) "Many lands," etc.  
 Robin Hall & Jimmy MacGregor: SONGS OF SCOTLAND (Monitor 365)  
 Tennessee Ernie Ford: CIVIL WAR SONGS OF THE NORTH (Capitol 1539)  
 Tennessee Ernie Ford: CIVIL WAR SONGS OF THE SOUTH (Capitol 1540)  
 Jimmie Rodgers: THE FOLKSONG WORLD OF JIMMIE RODGERS (Roulette 25150)  
 Burl Ives: THE BEST OF BURL IVES (Decca DXB 167) A 2-LP rehash of older LP's.  
 Memphis Slim: BROKEN SOUL BLUES (United Artists 6137)  
 Stringbean: OLD TIME BANJO PICKIN' AND SINGIN' (Starday 142) One of the very best of the country folk artists in his first solo album.  
 Ellen Behnke: FOLKSONGS AT THE LION'S HEAD (Walden 400)  
 Sonny Terry & Brownie McGhee: BLUES AND SHOUTS (Fantasy 3317)  
 Harry Belafonte: JUMP UP CALYPSO (RCA-Victor 2388) Harry and his army sing.  
 Julie Meredith: SONGS OF VICE AND VIRTUE (Imperial 9114)  
 Oscar Brand: SONGBAG OF FOLK FAVORITES (Riverside 7508) Rehash of older LP's.  
 Carl Sandburg: POEMS FOR CHILDREN (Caedmon 1124)  
 Oscar Brand: SONGS FOR ADULTS (ABC 388)  
 Brand at Town Hall with Faier and Hellerman,

Mance Lipscomb will have an LP on Frank Sinatra's Reprise label in October.

BILLBOARD reports that Bill Randle, former disc-jockey and now producer of folk albums, has recorded a number of authentic Southern Mountain singers, fiddlers, story-tellers, etc. When they will appear and on what label is not made clear, but the records sound very good.

Bill Smith: FOLK JAZZ (Contemporary 3591)  
Modern jazz treatments of JOHN HENRY, BLOW THE MAN DOWN, GO DOWN MOSES, etc. This usually doesn't work.

John Lee Hooker: THE FOLKLORE OF JOHN LEE HOOKER (VeeJay 1033)

Salli Terri: I KNOW MY LOVE (Capitol 8556)

Brock Peters: ACCENT ON ROOTS (Strand 1029)

Pete Seeger: IN CONCERT (Folklore 1)

Arhoolie, the IBC label, has released a country album by the Hodges Brothers (5001).

The Clancy Brothers & Tommy Makem: THE CLANCY BROTHERS AND TOMMY MAKEM (Columbia 1648) Pete Seeger accompanies on banjo.

Robert Smith: BALLADS OF THE BRITISH ISLES (Capricorn 8007)

Willie Brady: IRELAND'S STREET SINGER (Triad 635)

Richard Levitt: WAYFARING STRANGER (Period 751)

Shelby Flint: SHELBY FLINT (Valiant 401)  
Pop singer sings SCARLET RIBBONS, etc.

Brook Benton: BOLL WEEVIL SONG (Mercury 20641) Top 40 folkum by crooner.

The new Everly Brothers album on Warner Brothers contains BULLY OF THE TOWN.

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

PEGGY SEEGER AND EWAN MacCOLL: TWO-WAY TRIP (Folkways 8755)

TOMMY MAKEM: SONGS OF TOMMY MAKEM (Tradition 1044)

THE CLANCY BROTHERS AND TOMMY MAKEM (Tradition 1042)

THE BORDERS (Folkways 8776)

BIG JOE WILLIAMS: TOUGH TIMES (Arhoolie 1002)

PINEY WOODS BLUES (Delmar 602)

PRISON WORKSONGS (Folk-Lyric A-5)

ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS: FREE AGAIN (Prestige Bluesville 1026)

COUNTRY NEGRO JAM SESSIONS (Folk-Lyric 111)

JEANNIE ROBERTSON: SCOTTISH BALLADS AND FOLK SONGS (Prestige International 13006)

MANCE LIPSCOMB: TEXAS SHARECROPPER AND SONGSTER (Arhoolie 1001)

THE FOLK MUSIC OF THE NEWPORT FOLK FESTIVAL 1959-1960, Vols. 1-2 (Folkways 2431-2432)

CHARLIE PATTON (Origin 1)

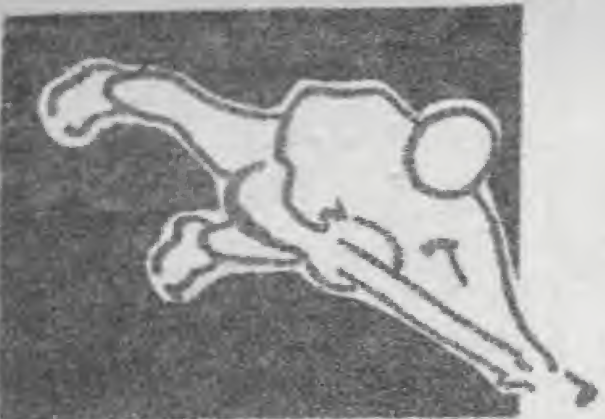
LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS: IN NEW YORK (Candid 8010)

SING OUT WITH PETE SEEGER! (Folkways 2455)

# LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

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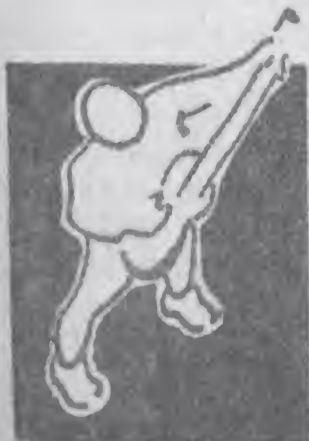
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THE LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW



On our cover this month is the Reverend Gary Davis, blind street-singer from Harlem, who, in the words of LSR blues reviewer Barry Hansen, "is easily the best male religious singer since Blind Willie Johnson, and, as a guitarist, is unexcelled by any living performer in any traditional style in America." Reverend Davis is recording a series of LP's for Ken Goldstein on the Prestige Bluesville label. He also has one available album on the Riverside label (148) as well as a now-out-of-print Stinson LP. See inside issue for a review of Davis' latest album. Cover drawing is by Jon Pankake.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

## EDITORS' COLUMN

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*By Paul Nelson & Jon Pankake*

News release from Folkways Records: "The New Lost City Ramblers have signed an exclusive, long term contract with Folkways Records and Folkways Records in complete confidence in their talent and integrity believes that it will be able to assist the NLCR in their success and advancement together with Folkways Records" ... Bonnie Dobson has signed a similar contract with Prestige ...

(continued on page 45)

## \*\*\* RECORD REVIEWS \*\*\*

REVEREND GARY DAVIS: A LITTLE MORE FAITH  
(Prestige Bluesville 1032)

When LSR blues reviewer Barry Hansen was asked to write about this disc, he submitted the following brief, but to-the-point review: "Blind Gary Davis is easily the best male religious singer since Blind Willie Johnson, and as a guitarist is unexcelled by any living performer in any traditional style in America. This album takes up right where his first one left off. The length of this review has no bearing whatsoever on the quality of the record."

Amen to that, and perhaps it would be superfluous to add a bit more. Reverend Davis is certainly everything Barry says he is, and anyone who even thinks he likes folk music should have this record.

Gary Davis is as moving a religious singer as has ever been captured on phonograph record. His best songs on this album (CRUCIFIXION, A LITTLE MORE FAITH, YOU GOT TO MOVE, I'M GLAD I'M IN THAT NUMBER) have a stunning, overpowering emotional effect on the listener. It would be hard to imagine anyone not becoming deeply involved in Davis' re-telling of the story of Christ on the cross. CRUCIFIXION is a shattering Negro street singer version of the death of Christ that ranks in emotional potency with any of Robert Pete Williams' prison blues. A LITTLE MORE FAITH, the title song, is a beautiful "singing sermon,"

with fabulous guitar-voice interplay. I'M GLAD I'M IN THAT NUMBER (which uses the tune of LET US ALL GET TOGETHER) is a lighter, happier religious song with an almost "camp-meeting" flavor. YOU GOT TO MOVE (as well as all of the above songs) clearly illustrates Davis' dazzling guitar technique. I'LL BE ALL RIGHT SOMEDAY is a quiet number with a melody that is undoubtedly the source for WE SHALL OVERCOME. There is also the memorable MOTHERLESS CHILDREN, a song associated with Blind Willie Johnson, and many other fine numbers rarely heard before on record. There is a wonderful "sermon set to music," half sung and half spoken (THERE'S A TABLE SITTING IN HEAVEN), that bears much evidence as to Davis' common sense power as a preacher.

As a guitar virtuoso, Davis is probably unsurpassed by any folk artist in America. His guitar playing will flabbergast even the most knowledgeable of folknik pickers into a state of reverent humility. Gary can do absolutely anything on his old "Miss Gibson." A future Prestige release will feature Davis playing in addition to his 6-string: the 12-string guitar, the 5-string banjo, and the mouth harp. A friend of ours, Mel Lyman, assures us he's terrific on all of them.

Davis' former album on Prestige (1015) easily made our last year's TOP TEN RECORDS OF THE YEAR list. This one will certainly have no trouble finding its way onto this year's list. Any readers who haven't heard Gary Davis yet should not miss this album.

Any reader who has heard Reverend Davis will already have it.

#### OBRAY RAMSEY SINGS FOLK SONGS FROM THE THREE LAURELS (Prestige International 13020)

Obray Ramsey, traditional ballad singer and banjo picker from Marshall, North Carolina, first appeared on recordings in the now-defunct Riverside folklore series about 4 years ago. His discs have since become collector's items, and the songs and vocal and instrumental stylings heard on them have widely influenced young city folk musicians.

Ramsey is often described as one of the few folksingers who are able to sing really well with the banjo. His early recordings demonstrate his skill in subordinating the stridency of the instrument to his singing -- the voice clearly dominant and free in cadence, the accompaniment a subordinate and fluid harmonic pattern of single notes picked in a manner closely related to modern "Scruggs" licks. Ramsey's vocals could stand quite well alone, as unaccompanied performances.

The present album finds Ramsey in superb voice, performing a program of traditional ballads and songs that are much more appropriate to his gentle, dignified Carolina singing style than were the Jimmie Rodgers songs of his most recent outing. The album's finest side, and one of the most haunting tunes on any recent folk recording, is RAIN AND SNOW, which in Ramsey's performance is an extremely poetic and

lyric interpretation of a rough-hewn "white blues" structurally akin to the Doc Boggs SUGAR BABY classic on the Folkways Anthology. RAIN AND SNOW represents Ramsey's unique blend of vocal and instrumental talents at its most arresting and moving.

Strangely, on most of the other songs, Ramsey has chosen for this session to confine his banjo accompaniments to a less interesting series of staccato pinches, their harmonic spareness compensated for by Tom Hunter's guitar accompaniment. The rigidity of the resulting rhythm will seem to many to distract from the subtlety of Ramsey's singing -- especially on OMIE WISE and SAILOR ON THE DEEP BLUE SEA. But this is a minor point in the overall light of Ramsey's superior singing and fascinating repertoire, and this is an album not to be missed. The liner notes of D. K. Wilgus, pointing up Ramsey's value as an original, progressive, and creative folk musician, are an added bonus. Ramsey is a discovery and a favorite informant of folklorist Kenneth S. Goldstein, and Mr. Goldstein's interest in documenting Ramsey's music over an extended period of time should assure us of many more Ramsey records as equally rewarding as this one.

(Editors' Note: For more on Obray Ramsey, see the letter from Mel Lyman, friend and neighbor of Obray, appearing on page 41.)

THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW is published at 3220 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis 7, Minnesota. Send us money.

JESSE FULLER: THE LONE CAT (Good Time Jazz 12039)

If the current pace of recording country blues artists continues (and there is every indication that it will), 1961 will surely be known as the year of the greatest country blues renaissance in history. Already we have two distinct organizations devoted entirely to this field: the Origin Jazz Club and the International Blues Club. Men like Chris Strachwitz, Sam Charters, Ken Goldstein, Pete Welding, Mack McCormick, and Harry Oster roam the United States in search of both new and old blues talents for a vast variety of labels which includes Folkways, Prestige, Tradition, 77, Arhoolie, and Folk-Lyric. Several labels, including Columbia, have begun to reissue valuable 78rpm material that has been unavailable to the general record buying public for years. In France and England, interest in American blues is at a fever pitch. Many European record companies have produced beautiful albums of American rural blues. Moses Asch of Folkways is planning two gigantic re-issue series pertaining entirely to the country blues. Sam Charters will edit one; Charles Edward Smith the other. Scores of other albums are in the works -- by literally dozens of companies.

While there seems to be no shortage in the documentation of good country blues singers at this time, there is a most definite apathy concerning another equally

valuable asset of Negro tradition -- namely that of the rural folksinger, or "songster." These men are at home in nearly every kind of Negro music: hollers, straight country blues, pop songs, jazz tunes, vaudeville, spirituals, etc. Their music tends to be less introspective than that of the country blues singers; more concerned with a variety of subjects, less apt to rely heavily on "women" songs.

Most of them are also instrumentalists of the very first order -- often proficient at playing any number of instruments. Leadbelly, who has been well documented, was such a musician. Horace Sprott, Mance Lipscomb, and Pink Anderson are others.

Undoubtedly the singer with the greatest popular appeal along this line is the Californian, Jesse Fuller -- a veritable walking, talking, living, breathing history of Negro music. Fuller is by turn a blues singer, a comedian, a jazz musician, a pop artist -- and often many of these all rolled into one. He is quite probably the most enjoyable performer on records today. His optimism is unquenchable; his energy near legendary. He will do a tap dance while playing his way through a difficult 12-string guitar solo ("I'm the only man who can tap dance and play the guitar at the same time!" he gleefully announces). He will oft times mix guitar, harmonica, kazoo, cymbals, and footdella (a homemade bass invention which he plays with his right foot while playing the cymbals with his left) to-

gether with brilliant results. He may sing a corny song about THE MONKEY AND THE ENGINEER or he may do a blues such as NEW CORRINE. He may get up and dance a jig. He may sing you an autobiographical song (LEAVIN' MEMPHIS, ERISCO BOUND) or he may just play the guitar (there is an astounding instrumental called GUITAR BLUES on this album). Whatever he does, Jesse Fuller will prove himself to be one of the finest folk artists in the world, a man woefully unappreciated for his talents. Good Time Jazz has done us a great service in so ably documenting the work of Jesse Fuller in this LP and also on an earlier disc (12031). We strongly recommend both records to you, as well as Jesse's earlier album on Cavalier, and predict that Fuller will soon become one of the mainstays in your collection.

THE BEST OF GUY CARAWAN  
(Prestige International 13013)

Alan Lomax has been characterizing Guy Carawan for years now as "a serious city singer who cares about folk style and content," but until this album came along, there really wasn't much evidence to back up his claim. There were some good moments (notably the Southern Mountain banjo tunes) on Folkways, to be sure, but there was also an oversized amount of "crooned" material, which seemed to belie any interest in either folk style or content.

Happily, we can now report that Guy has proven Lomax to be exactly right. THE

**BEST OF GUY CARAWAN** is just what the title implies: Guy's best record to date. It is in many ways a transitional album. One can hear Guy come to grips with folk style for the first time. There are still traces of the old style (e.g. the crooning on the Negro songs) which crop up every now and then, and not every song reaches the high artistic level that Guy is constantly striving for, but the ones he gets right proudly point the way toward his gradual emergence as a really fine city folksinger. With this album, one feels, he has come a long way toward achieving his goal.

The reason? In his notes, Guy says: "For the past two years, I have been living and working...in the South..I decided I would try to get closer to the roots of the music..As (I ~~came~~) to know the people and their way of life, the music and songs (took on) new meaning..These have been two of the most rewarding years of my life."

The results of these experiences show up clearly on this disc. There is now some depth and profundity in the manner in which Guy sings his songs -- he seems truly to understand them. Listeners familiar with his earlier work will find it hard to believe that the Guy Carawan singing **JOHNSON BOYS** in this album is the same one who used to croon **RED ROSY BUSH** and sing all those pop-style blues. **JOHNSON BOYS** shows Guy using his voice to great advantage -- he hangs and holds and pushes his high notes; his voice soars, but al-

ways **WITHIN** the Southern Mountain style of singing. He now understates, rather than overstates. He is thoughtful and quiet; closer to the way the song was originally sung, and less like an audience-leading junior Pete Seeger. His work carries more of a ring of truth to it than it ever before did.

Perhaps most importantly, he seems at last to have realized some sort of a personal repertoire that is right for HIM. There is less wild experimentation with all types of songs. He undersings **PASTURES OF PLENTY** convincingly, almost reverently. **LOVIN' HANNAH** gets a fine interpretation (compare this to the way he used to do ballads!). **RED APPLE JUICE**, **CHEWING GUM**, **WILD GOOSE**, and **900 MILES** all show traces of a conscious attempt at rightful style. **WE ARE SOLDIERS IN THE ARMY** is a good stomping rhythmic number from the Sit-In movement.

Much credit must go to Guy and to producer Ken Goldstein for this album. It marks the rise of a serious city folksinger interested enough to bring his songs to life via the traditional styles of the folk themselves. Guy has made a giant step. Let us hope he continues in this direction.

**THE ORIGINAL AND GREAT CARTER FAMILY**  
(Camden 586) A Canadian recording.

It is embarrassing to have to report that this excellent record, the best available album of the musicians whose stunning

originality was to change forever the face of rural music both amateur and professional in our country, is not obtainable in The United States. A fact such as this makes the validity of our "folk music revival" rather suspect, to say the least.

While the few Carter sides familiar to modern audiences are almost all vocal solos by Sara Carter, this collection emphasizes the singing talents of the entire group. Sara is featured on two solos, WABASH CANNONBALL and WILDWOOD FLOWER, and is joined by Maybelle's harmony on the other numbers. A. P. Carter himself provides a good country bottom to the choruses. An unusual Carter side is SWEET FERN, on which Sara yodels and Maybelle picks the old-fashioned Hawaiian guitar. The album's most charming number, a vocal and guitar duet by Sara and Maybelle called KITTY WALTZ, has many of the qualities that were later to appear in the music of Woody Guthrie, himself an ardent Carter fan. Though the sides here are not individually dated, they were recorded by RCA-Victor from the Carters' first year of recording (1927) to roughly their peak (1932). These sides are far superior to the later Columbia sides recently re-released on Harmony (and, unlike this set, echoed up in the process), and are comparable in technique, if not in content, to the choice Victor sides appearing on the Folkways Anthology.

Today's folknik, though he may sing WORRIED MAN BLUES and pick WILDWOOD FLOW-

ER on his guitar, does not know or care about the Carter Family. More knowledgeable students, collectors, and lovers of folk music will not want to pass up this disc -- a bargain at \$1.98. It can be obtained by mail from Floyd Williston's CO-OP BOOKSHOP, 882 Main Street, Winnipeg 4, Manitoba, Canada. Include 50¢ for postage and packing.

BONNIE DOBSON: "SHE'S LIKE THE SWALLOW"  
AND OTHER FOLK SONGS  
(Prestige International 13021)

Every time we hear this album, we are reminded of a rather wacky New Year's Eve, 1960. Bonnie had been in town all of the previous week initiating a "folk music policy" at a rowdy local 3.2 joint called The Padded Cell. She had been singing professionally for less than a year at this time, and was used to clubs which catered exclusively to folk music. Most of the people she had previously sung to knew what folk music was all about. Things were quite different at the Cell. The whole town was football crazy, what with the University of Minnesota Gophers in the Rose Bowl. Crowds were noisy and vulgar and obviously uninterested in the ballads Bonnie sang. The first night, the then very unprofessional Miss Dobson almost broke down and cried. The next night was nearly as bad. Gradually, however, she began to win them over. Her disarm-

ingly honest artistry and beautiful personality were taking effect. It was almost like watching the last scene of the film PATHS OF GLORY. By nights five and six, she had quite a little audience coming to see her every night, and people were paying attention. She had captivated everybody -- even the notorious stonehearts at THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW.

With this debut album on Prestige, Bonnie is going to capture a lot more hearts and win many new friends. If comparisons are necessary, we would not hesitate to liken this album to Peggy Seeger's first record, SONGS OF COURTING AND COMPLAINT. Bonnie cannot play as well as Peggy, but her singing style cannot fail to remind one of the relatively straightforward earlier Seeger efforts. Both have that beautifully pure and radiant quality that can set a listener aglow with admiration. Bonnie's voice is that rare mixture of charm and youthful naivete that seems to give meaningful magic to everything she sings. In many ways, she is not a particularly skillful ballad singer -- yet the quality she projects completely transcends any of her shortcomings. Her growth as a folk artist (and her first experiments with style) ought to be something to hear. We would suggest that the prospective record buyer looking for something new and exciting in city singing listen to THE FIRST TIME, a truly beautiful love song written by Ewan MacColl. All of Bonnie's virtues are

readily apparent here. THE ROAD TO GRAND-MERE (a delightfully humorous change-of-pace), THE OLD MAID'S LAMENT, ACROSS THE BLUE MOUNTAINS, and THE CRUEL WAR IS RAGING are also very nice.

Producer Ken Goldstein is to be congratulated for having the wisdom to sign Bonnie to an exclusive Prestige International recording contract. This should insure all but the most ethnic of purists many, many years of fine listening.

THE SONGS AND STORIES OF AUNT MOLLY JACKSON (Folkways 5457) Stories told by Aunt Molly Jackson/Songs sung by John Greenway.

"Since I was a little girl I have composed songs and sung them to pass my sorrows away," says Aunt Molly Jackson. "Some people think my stories are too sad to be true and other folks say they are not interested in the songs I write because they are so sorrowful they cannot be true. But I have never written one word that has not been the truth, and I believe I have had more trouble than any other poor woman who has ever been born."

The facts of Aunt Molly Jackson's long and incredible life certainly seem to bear out her statement. Like another star-crossed voyager of U. S. "hard times," the Oklahoman, Woody Guthrie, Aunt Molly lived in such monumental hardship all her life that it is a wonder she was able to survive at all, let alone function for 34 years as a Kentucky midwife, and compose

so many fine songs. Married at 14, the mother of two sons before she was 17, she lost husband, brother, and son in coal mining accidents. Her mother died when she was six. Her father and another brother were blinded in the mines. Her sister's child starved to death. She herself was permanently crippled in a bus accident. Yet, as John Greenway says in his excellent **AMERICAN FOLKSONGS OF PROTEST**, "there were many other women who mourned fathers, husbands, sons, and brothers among the seventy thousand men killed in the coal mines during Aunt Molly's adulthood in Kentucky, and many other women saw children starve to death. Aunt Molly was exceptional only because she was articulate."

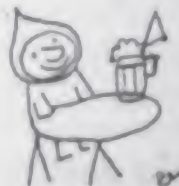
Folkways Records and John Greenway have now put together **THE** phonographic documentary of Aunt Molly Jackson, her life, and her songs. The disc is made up of two almost equal parts: (1) Aunt Molly herself, in tape-recorded interviews, telling of her experiences in the hard-bitten Kentucky mining counties of Harlan, Laurel, and Clay in the early 1900's; (2) noted folklorist John Greenway performing 10 of her finest songs in a most empathic way. As an incisive projection of a vital part of American folklore, this album has few equals. The emotional portrait here presented of Aunt Molly Jackson is one so powerful and poignant, so realistically beautiful and brutal, that this record deserves to take its  
(continued page 19)

**SONGS OF SEDUCTION**, Caedmon 1143: \$5.95.



This second album of **THE FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN**, recorded by Alan Lomax and Peter Kennedy, features Harry Cox, Jeanie Robertson, Seamus Ennis, and many other fine field singers. Volumes 3 (**JACK OF ALL TRADES**), 4 (**THE CHILDE BALLADS, 1**), and 5 (**THE CHILDE BALLADS, 2**) will be out soon. Keep posted in **LSR**.

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Dr. Greenway sings 'I AM A UNION WOMAN,  
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THE BIRTH OF ROBIN HOOD (one of the most  
beautiful of all Aunt Molly songs, and  
worth the price of the album alone), MR.  
CUNDIFF TURN ME LOOSE, THE DEATH OF HARRY  
SIMMS, DREADFUL MEMORIES (perhaps her best  
song), PISTOL PACKIN' WOMAN, HUNGRY RAG-  
GED BLUES, and HARD TIMES IN COLMAN'S  
MINES. Aunt Molly relates in a touching  
and marvellous way stories and incidents  
surrounding the birth of the songs. Some  
of them are as heart-rending as anything  
you are likely to hear.

On THE DEATH OF HARRY SIMMS: "(Harry  
Simms) met this gun thug on the railroad  
track, and the thug shot him in the stom-  
ach. They (mine owners) took him and an-  
other union man who was with him to town,  
and put the other fellow into jail. They  
left Harry Simms sitting on a rock in  
front of the town hospital with a bullet  
in his stomach. He sat there on the rock  
an hour or more with his hands on his  
stomach, bleeding to death. He was sitting  
there because the hospital wouldn't take  
him in till somebody guaranteed to pay his  
bill. After awhile a man said he would  
pay the bill, so they took Harry in, but  
it was too late. The gun thug got away  
and hid in the caves for six months, and  
one night he started to cross the road and  
someone shot him six times with a Cold .45  
pistol all around his heart, then whoever

it was shot him, cut off his head and  
threwed it on the other side of the road."

On DREADFUL MEMORIES: "I had to nurse  
all the little children till the last  
breath left them, and all the light I had  
was a string in a can lid with a little  
bacon grease in it. Kerosene was five  
cents a quart, and I could not get five  
cents. Thirty-seven babies died in my  
arms in the last months of 1931. Their  
little stomachs busted open; they was mor-  
tified inside. Oh, what an awful way for  
a baby to die. Not a thing to give our  
babies to eat but the strong soup from  
soup beans; and that took the lining  
from their little stomachs, so that they  
bled inside and mortified, and died.  
And died so hard that before we got help  
from other states my nerves was so stirred  
up for four years afterward by the memory  
of them babies suffering and dying in my  
arms, and me sitting by their little dead  
bodies three or four hours before daylight  
in the dark to keep some hungry dog or  
cat from eating up their little dead  
bodies. Then four years later I still  
had such sad memories of these babies  
that I wrote this song."

Of HUNGRY RAGGED BLUES: "For two or  
three days we did not have anything to  
make soup out of. On the 17th morning  
in October my sister's little girls waked  
me up early. She had 15 little ragged  
children and she was taking them around  
to the soup kitchen to try to get them a  
bowl of soup. She told me some of them

children had not eat anything in two days.  
It was a cold rainy morning; the little  
children was all barefooted, and the blood  
was running out of the tops of their little  
feet and dripping down between their little  
toes unto the ground. You could track  
them to the soup kitchen by the blood."

It is inconceivable that anyone at all  
seriously interested in American folk  
music will pass up this record. 'It is  
one of the most moving and important al-  
bums of this or any other year.

#### PRESTIGE BLUESVILLE RELEASES....

The new era of Bluesville has produced  
two fine new records; you'd hardly believe  
it was the same label that treated us to  
all than organ music last year. Kenneth  
Goldstein has teamed up with two of the  
nation's outstanding blues scholars and  
collectors: Chris Strachwitz (who intro-  
duced Mance Lipscomb to the world) pre-  
sents K. C. Douglas on K.C.'S BLUES  
(Bluesville 1023); and Sam Charters (who  
wrote THE book) offers INTRODUCING MEMPHIS  
WILLIE B. (Bluesville 1034).

K. C. and Willie represent two very dif-  
ferent styles of traditional blues singing.  
K. C. is a Mississippi-born migrant labor-  
er who has recently spent most of his  
time in California; he is known to the  
collector set through an album made for  
Emory Cook a few years ago. On this set  
he ambles through a program of 12 blues,  
mostly originals, with his own unamplified,

rather undistinctive guitar accompaniment. The pace is very relaxed; rather than generating any kind of excitement he sings pleasantly, in a restrained but resonant voice. His style is moderately sophisticated in its easy refinement and close adherence to form, but his blues are simple and direct, without pretense. In short, he is not a stirring singer, but he can be very moving with his quiet honesty. One is moved to compare him with Brownie McGhee (who also sings in a somewhat restrained and sophisticated way) and wish that K. C. had Brownie's talent (which he lacks) and also that Brownie had K.C.'s straightforward, unpretentious manner. K. C. Douglas is not a great blues singer, but he has a message and will especially appeal to those who find more authentic Southern styles too raucous.

Memphis Willie B(orum)'s style is a superb example of pure Southern blues performance. He is a blues singer who captures perfectly the tight excitement and compelling spirit of the great country blues men of the 30's, such as Robert Johnson and Blind Willie McTell. Without being a slavish imitator of any one of these men, he is perfectly in the 1930 country blues idiom, as it is documented in Charters' book and on the accompanying record. He plays his cheap-sounding F-hole guitar with real authority, spilling out magnificent runs like a good blues pianist, which are countered with violent single-string bass runs. On top of this

he plays harmonica beautifully, and has mastered the trick of simultaneous guitar and harp without relegating either instrument to second place, and is very likely the best simultaneous harp and guitar player on records today. His songs are mostly originals, covering a great variety of subjects including his own experiences as a soldier in World War II (OVERSEAS BLUES). As Charters acknowledges, Memphis Willie B. provides the "real, hard blues" he had traveled all over the South looking for.

These two sets prove beyond a doubt Prestige's good intentions in the blues field. K. C. will make a great many friends with his album, and no collector (especially not the ones who spend twice the price of a Prestige Bluesville LP for one 78 of Willie's kind of blues) can afford to be without the Memphis Willie B. set. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

#### THE BEST OF ROBIN ROBERTS (Prestige International 13017)

For the benefit of those readers who have not had the pleasure of hearing and seeing Robin Roberts (no corny jokes about the baseball pitcher, please) in the flesh, let me impart the following information: Robin is a lovely, lovely woman. In addition, she is a trained actress who knows how to carry herself and how to use her face and voice to make herself attractive and appealing to an audience. I saw

Robin perform in New York about two years ago -- there she stood before me, slender and fragile in the spotlight, and all winks, smiles, and feminine guile. My susceptible masculine heart throbbed so loudly I didn't really care that the singing that accompanied this vision was awfully feeble stuff. In the light of this experience, I refuse to be blamed for expecting THE BEST OF ROBIN ROBERTS to be, like all her previous discs, just another platter of sweetmeats served up by a pretty but decidedly thin voice.

All of which is by way of building up to saying Robin's new record is surprisingly, even startlingly, superior to all her former recorded efforts. Listen, as I did, to her unaccompanied singing of one of the most extravagantly lovely of all Anglo-American airs, THE LOWLANDS OF HOLLAND -- sung firmly, paced beautifully, the melody delicately and fluidly decorated. Nothing feeble here. Move back to OLD KIMBALL and hear how Robin can use the naturally airy quality of her voice to capture an echo of the hard keenness of Mrs. Texas Gladden's masterful ballad singing style. On these two numbers alone one hears more real singing than is ordinarily contained on an entire LP of the usual city folksinger (Robin's old albums included). One may go on to point out the foot-tapping lilt of Robin's "bits of Irish devilry and jigging music," LANIGAN'S BALL and WHAT WOULD YOU DO; or ONE SUNDAY MORNING, a song of the Irish

(Cont. page 29) 24

## NEW RELEASES

**FA2335 SIMPLE GIFTS;**  
Anglo-American folk songs sung by George and Gerry Armstrong. Mairi's Wedding, Corn Stalk Fiddle, Jealous Brothers, Richard of Taunton Deane, Dulcimer Medley, Went To See My Suzie, Lady from the West Country, and others. \$5.95

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George & Gerry Armstrong



Anglo-American Folk Songs in Folkways Records FA 2335



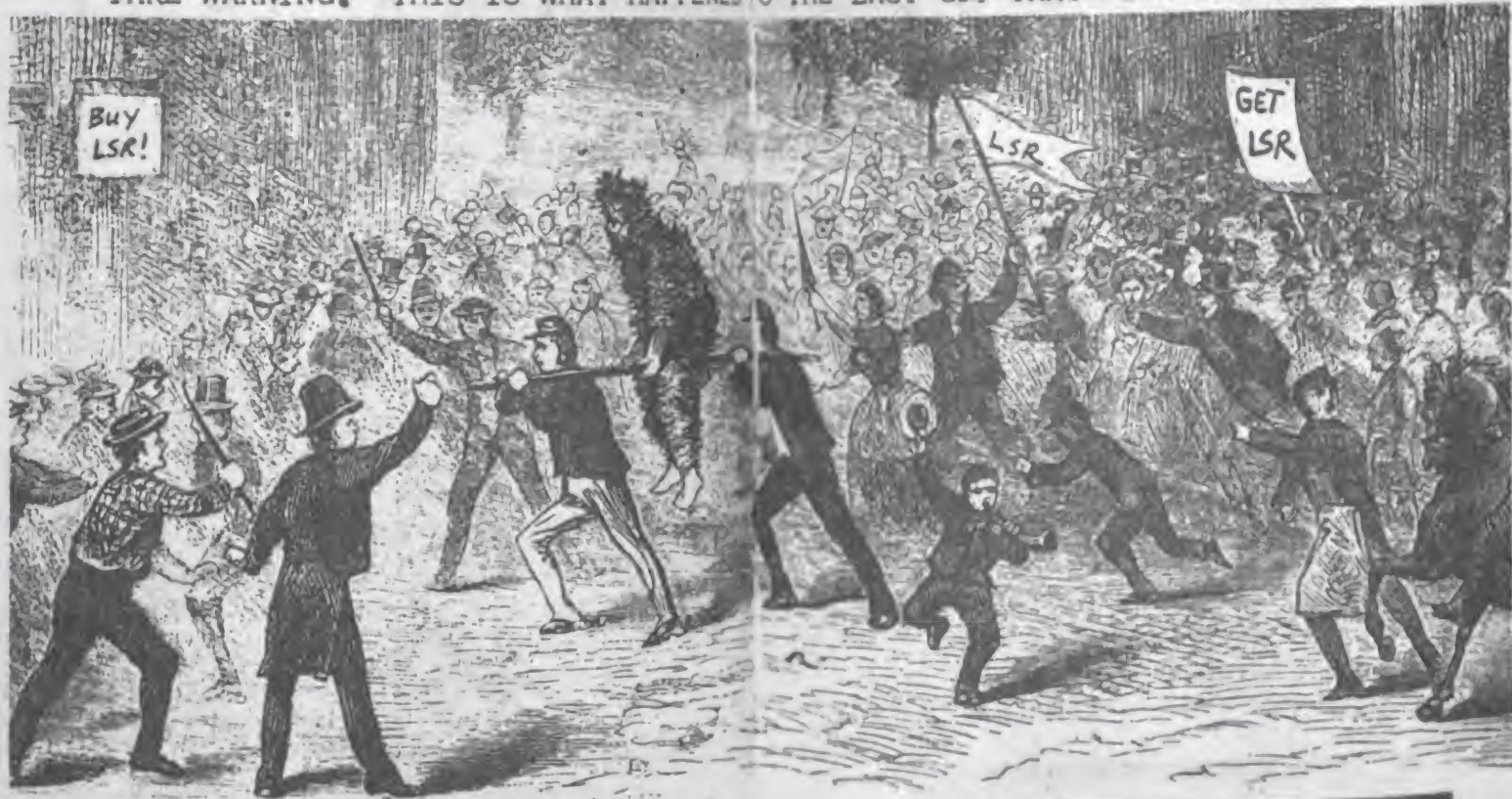
sung by Jack Elliott

**FC7501 WOODY GUTHRIE'S "SONGS TO GROW ON"** sung by JACK ELLIOT; Why Oh Why, Don't You Push Me, Wake Up, Put Your Finger in the Air, Build a House, Dance Around, My Little Seed, Swim Swim, Needle Song, and others. \$5.95

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# SING OUT!

## *The Folk Song Magazine*

Now in its 10th year of publication, SING OUT is the oldest, regularly-published folk song periodical in America. Each issue contains 12-15 traditional and contemporary folk-songs, plus articles on folk music and news of the current folk song scene by such writers as Alan Lomax, Pete Seeger, Ruth Rubin, and many others. Edited by Irwin Silber, published five times yearly.

1 year (5 issues) 2.50  
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# SING OUT!

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New York 36, N. Y.

(Cont from page 24)

"troubles" shouted out in a gratifyingly unladylike fashion. All seem to be part of the newly aware (if not entirely new) and more absorbed and believable singing of Robin Roberts. The album's title is no misnomer -- this is Robin's best, and possibly a harbinger of even better things to come.

It would be nice to say in conclusion that Robin has given us a perfect album, but unfortunately she hasn't. Her extremely limited guitar accompaniments become tiresome after a while, and vocally she sometimes lapses back into her accustomed loafing sort of chirping. LOLLY TOO DUM (a song which has come a long and arduous road from Harlan County!) will give the new listener a sample of Robin at her most smilingly superficial and boring.

The next time I hear Robin in person, however, I have no doubt that one toss of her pretty head will have my heart flopping over as helplessly and as foolishly as ever -- but at least I will know that somewhere behind that exquisite facade lies a really good singer if and when Robin feels like letting her out. (Reviewer: Edmund Gilbertson)

EWAN MacCOLL: BOTHY BALLADS (Folkways 8759)  
EWAN MacCOLL: BRITISH INDUSTRIAL BALLADS  
(Vanguard 9090)

Vanguard Records, continuing an eye-opening new policy of un-schmaltzy folk

music albums, offers this month a collection of Ewan MacColl titles originally appearing in Britain on two Topic 10" LPs. As blunt and unfastidious as a pipe wrench and rough as a cob, these ballads of truckers, weavers, miners, and engineers present MacColl (himself a one-time laborer and the son of an iron moulder) in his element. In addition to such traditional songs as THE WARK OF THE WEAVERS, THE COLLIER LADDIE, and THE FOUR LOOM WEAVERS, three of MacColl's own compositions are included: 21 YEARS, CANNILY CANNILY, and CHAMPION AT KEEPING 'EM ROLLING. These last are worth a second listen, for they demonstrate not only MacColl's insight into the themes of working class life, but also his ability to fashion poetry out of simple language, to creatively manipulate the authentic turn of phrase and color of dialect he has so exhaustively collected and studied. A fascinating and artistic use of folklore, indeed. Peggy Seeger, by some mysterious musical wizardry, continues to provide accompaniments on guitar and banjo that sound as appropriately British as one could wish. This is a worthwhile issue -- one of the very best in the entire Vanguard catalogue.

"Along with the sea chanties, the bothy ballads constitute the most important body of folksongs to be created in the 19th century," states MacColl. And among the most delightful, one is tempted to add. Judging from the songs, the bothies (as the quarters for the hired farm laborers in

rural Northeast Scotland are called) harbored a crew of rogues and rascals whose outlook on the world and on themselves constitutes an earthy philosophy of life run through, incidentally, with a ribaldry that occasionally pops out in the songs in the form of extremely frank lyrics.

The album's individual elements of text, melody, vocalization, mood, and accompaniment mesh most handsomely in a fantastically entertaining number called THE KEACH IN THE CREEL -- a sly account of a madcap seduction with a climax as insane as that of any slapstick two-reeler silent movie. With MacColl bellowing out a "Ricky doo dum day" chorus, Alf Edwards tootling the ocarina, and Peggy Seeger tickling the proceedings along with her trusty banjo, one couldn't imagine the Pied Piper himself producing more jiggy, appealing music than this!

MacColl, though not a countryman himself, brays out these accounts of seducers, simpletons, and heroes with all the abandon one would expect of an Aberdeenshire plowman astride his furrow. Not, however, that one would mistake MacColl for a field singer. His is a studied art -- perhaps even more so on this recording than is his usual wont -- and his greatness lies not in his ability to reproduce dialect or to mimic mannerisms, but in his ability to absorb the themes and stylistic nuances of his country's music, infuse them with his own genius, and communicate them anew as art firmly grounded in folklore and

tradition. Would that our own country could someday produce a city folksinger of MacColl's stature.

Because of MacColl's political beliefs, the United States State Department has benevolently taken upon itself the responsibility of protecting the American people from him, and at this writing MacColl is no longer allowed to enter the United States. Since the next step in securing the safety of the country against MacColl's onslaughts will probably be the banning of his recordings, LSR readers are advised to purchase these brilliant albums immediately. And hide them when the book and record burning authorities come around.

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#### FOLK QUICKIE REVIEWS

Albums meritorious and meretricious,  
in rapid review.

"I prefer to learn my songs orally... taking notes only when it is apparent I will not see an informant again..In this way I find I can learn the long ballads by heart and..put my own stamp on them.. I attempt at all times to keep strictly to the sense of the original." So says collector-folksinger-English professor J. Barre Toelken in the notes to his first album, A GARLAND OF AMERICAN FOLKSONGS (Prestige International 13023). It's a real pity that the album itself bears no legitimate connection to the starry-eyed resolution above. Its glaring weakness (in the eyes of critics

definitely biased against this sort of thing) is that Mr. Toelken, who sounds just like Paul Clayton, has NOT put his "own stamp" (or indeed any sort of stamp) on any of the songs in this record. It is a Straightforward Album, if you'll pardon the expression, and as such presents much fascinating and unique material in a "style" so boring, so bland, and so devoid of excitement that it will quell the interest of all but the hardiest of folk fans. "I'm just a textbook, boys," he seems to be telling us. "I'm getting the words and the melody right. Who needs interpretation? Who needs style?" Some people do, Mr. Toelken, some people do.

One could take almost all the statements made above about the J. Barre Toelken album and apply them with equal validity to Rosalie Sorrels' FOLKSONGS OF IDAHO AND UTAH (Folkways 5343). Once again, the main value of the album is scholarship -- the presentation of new and interesting material. And once again the total stylelessness of the performances completely defeat the album's educational qualities and boredom sets in mighty fast. Husband Jim Sorrels contributes the usual straightforward guitar playing that this type of LP calls for while Rosalie handles the vocals. Both Mrs. Sorrels and Mr. Toelken have taken the brunt of their material from Idaho and Utah. Both seem to be good collectors. And yet both are so confounded dull to listen to that you wish they



had been replaced by a printed page. Those who glory in new material and are not particular about the way in which that material is sung may find something of interest here. Those of us who care about folk style will find nothing.

Guy Carawan has produced a second album of *The Trouble in the South*. This one is called *WE SHALL OVERCOME: SONGS OF THE FREEDOM RIDERS AND THE SIT-INS* (Folkways 5591). It is sung by the Montgomery Gospel Trio and the Nashville Quartet -- both groups composed of kids who have had first-hand experience in the Southern movement of which they sing. The songs are much the same ones contained on the memorable *NASHVILLE SIT-IN STORY* (Folkways 5590): reworked folk and gospel numbers, parodies, etc. Musically, the album is somewhat routine. The rightful emotions presented in the music are a good deal more than that.

Dominic Behan (Brendan's brother) makes his third American appearance in *FINNEGAN'S WAKE AND OTHER IRISH FOLKSONGS* (Folk-Lyric 113). For those who haven't heard the Riverside *EASTER MONDAY* album or the Folkways *SINGING STREETS* (with MacColl) disc, this record will be an excellent introduction to the work of the 35-year-old Irish singer-author-poet. Behan here sings his way pleasantly and artlessly (he is far less a singer and artist than either MacColl or Lloyd) through

(Cont. page 37)

**WANTED TO BUY BY LSR:** We are interested in buying or trading for the following records. Any information on where we could get them would be appreciated. If interested in selling, please quote your price and state how many copies of the record you have. Send us your want list.

WE WANT...WE WANT...WE WANT...WE WANT

**Paul Clayton: WANTED FOR MURDER**  
(Riverside 12-640)

**MacColl, Lloyd: THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS (CHILD BALLADS)**  
(Riverside 12-621/622 Volume One)  
(Riverside 12-627/628 Volume Four)

**STINSON ALBUMS: Folksay, Volume Six**  
**Sonny Terry and his Mouth-harp**  
**Gary Davis, The Singing Reverend**  
**Woody & Cisco: Cowboy Songs**  
**Woody & Cisco: So. Mt. Hoedowns**  
**Hally Wood: Texas Songs**  
Both albums by Harry & Jeanie West

**Hally Wood: O LOVELY APPEARANCE OF DEATH** (Elektra 10) 10" disc.

**BRUNSWICK 10" ALBUMS:**  
**MOUNTAIN FROLIC** and **LISTEN TO OUR STORY**

**78's by Hobart Smith, Texas Gladden, Woody Guthrie.**

Have you ladies gotten your SONGS OF COURTSHIP album yet? It's the first of a new five-volume FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN set on Caedmon. Alan Lomax and Peter Kennedy recorded it. Some of the singers are Jeanie Robertson, the McPeake Family, Seamus Ennis, and Elizabeth Cronin. THE LITTLE SANDY is going to review all five volumes at once, as soon as they're all released, but I've got my copy of SONGS OF COURTSHIP already. The number? Caedmon 1142. The price? Just \$5.95 direct from Caedmon, 461 Eighth Ave., N. Y. 1.



no less than 20 fine Irish folksongs, including a lovely song of his own courtship, KELVIN LASS. Robin Hall accompanies on guitar. Behan radiates a great deal of simple charm, and this record is highly recommended to fanciers of the folk music of the British Isles. It can be ordered from Folk-Lyric Records, 1945 Bay Street, Baton Rouge 2, Louisiana. Price is \$4.98 plus 35¢ postage -- and ask for a big, free Folk-Lyric catalogue.

Those readers who think the LSR hard-  
 hearts thrill to nothing besides hour-  
 long unaccompanied ballads sung by 90-  
 year-old ladies ought to see us stamping  
 our feet and grinning foolishly over the  
 new CLANCY BROTHERS AND TOMMY MAKEM  
 (Columbia 1648) record. The Clancys, who  
 walk the fine line between authenticity  
 and entertainment and frequently topple  
 into both, have been given a roaring  
 "spontaneous performance recording" by  
 Columbia -- about 200 "singing fans and  
 friends" were present at the recording  
 studio -- and the results add up to one of  
 the most enjoyably rowdy and rousing half  
 hours on wax. At the Playboy Club in  
 Chicago, it is said, the boys would thun-  
 der on "like Gangbusters" and personally  
 challenge the audience to heckle them.  
 "We'll come right out after you!" they'd  
 yell. Full of bawd and wonderful Irish  
 bluster, this spirit has been marvellous-  
 ly captured here. We here at LSR find  
 the Clancys and Tommy Makem a perfect ex-

ample of Izzy Young's credo, "good folk music is good fun," and heartily recommend that you run right out and buy this album-- it's a fine introduction to their work.

Pete Seeger has a new one -- on Columbia! Readers are advised not to panic, however. Folkways is not going out of business. Moe Asch has assured us that there is going to be no cessation of Seeger LP's on his label -- Pete has merely arranged a deal to do a certain number of albums for Columbia, that's all. This one, *STORY SONGS* (Columbia 1668), recorded in April at New York's Village Gate, is worth picking up chiefly for a wonderful 7-minute narration called *THE FOOLISH FROG* (reminiscent of Pete's *ABIYOYO* song, -- and just as good). It is credited to Pete's dad, folklorist Charles Seeger. Also on the plus side are *WAY OUT THERE* ("which Cisco and I used to yodel together"), *THE HALF-HITCH*, *FAYETTE COUNTY*, *PRETTY BOY FLOYD*, and a surprisingly good *BUFFALO SKINNERS* in which Pete seems to try harder than usual. Perhaps the fact that Woody Guthrie was in the audience that night had something to do with it. On the debit side are a woefully weak *WASHINGTON SQUARE* (by Ernie Marris) and *AIMEE McPHERSON*. All in all, this one is worth racking up in your Seeger collection. *THE FOOLISH FROG* is a real delight.

Folkways presents a brand new voice to folksinging circles in *KAREN JAMES* (Folk-

ways 3549), the debut LP by the Canadian lass of the same name. Alas, one wishes Moe Asch would have waited a year or two, since Miss James, a rather nervous cross between Joan Baez and Bonnie Dobson, clearly lacks the maturity to, at the present time, be a really good singer. There is an irritating sameness to most of this album. Both the vocals and the guitar accompaniments are dull and unperceptive. There is far too great an artistic gap -- and a lack of understanding -- between the singer and her songs. Also, there is an absolutely atrocious song, penned by Miss James herself, about Pete Seeger. Partial text: "Hey, Pete, hey! What do you say?/The judge wants to send you far, far, away/Hey, Pete, hey! Here's what we say!/We're behind Pete Seeger all the way!" Thankfully, Miss James does not carry her song to its logical conclusion: "Rah! Rah! Rah! And a Sis-boom-bah!" Perhaps she and Bill McAdoo will get together and write a great protest "Folk Process" opera.

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Next Month's Issue of LSR Will Contain:  
Reviews of Vanguard's *JOAN BAEZ* Vol. II,  
Prestige's *PINK ANDERSON* Vol. I, *SONNY'S STORY* (Sonny Terry without Brownie McGhee),  
*LAST NIGHT BLUES* (Sonny with Lightnin' Hopkins), Columbia's *SONGS OF THE FAMOUS CARTER FAMILY* by Lester Flatt, Earl Scruggs, and Maybelle Carter (on auto-harp); Folkways' *WOODY GUTHRIE'S SONGS TO GROW ON* with Jack Elliott; plus albums by Molly Scott, Jimmy Reed, and others!

(EDITORS' COLUMN cont. from page 45)  
don't approve of me. But then I'd be in a  
helluva fix if Gov. Faubus approved of me..  
Who's Ramblin' Jack Elliott?" ... Accord-  
ing to Irwin Silber, Folkways' CHANTONS EN  
FRANCAIS kid record is a "big hit with  
Caroline Kennedy." Attention, Caroline:  
ask your ma and pa to get you Jack Elliott's  
WOODY GUTHRIE'S SONGS TO GROW ON. Then  
you'll never have to go around asking,  
"Who's Ramblin' Jack Elliott?" ... Chicago  
folk fans, doubtless still exulting over  
the Horton Barker-Dick Chase concert of  
Oct. 29, can prepare for another treat:  
Pete and Peggy Seeger will play Orchestra  
Hall Dec. 1 ... LOS ANGELES NEWS: The LA  
branch of Friends of Old Time Music will  
sponsor concerts by Cousin Emmy and Bess  
Lomax. Coming to the Ash Grove: Jack  
Elliott, Flatt & Scruggs, and Clarence  
Ashley and his gang ... Warner Brothers  
Pictures is presenting a "SPLENDOR IN THE  
GRASS Folk Song Essay Contest." The con-  
testant who tells why "the powerful pass-  
ions, poignant pathos..groping love..  
shattered youth, and surging emotions" of  
the film "might particularly lend (them-  
selves) to authentic folk song treatment  
in the classic tradition" wins a Goya  
guitar. Contest judge is "world famed folk  
authority" Oscar Brand, who will probably  
laugh himself silly reading the entries.  
Let's all get out our pencils and enter  
LSR's "Write An Authentic Child Ballad on  
Any Ingmar Bergman Movie." Judge will be  
Jay Smith, who also needs a good laugh now  
and then.

## LETTERS TO THE LSR EDITORS

Editors:

OBRAY RAMSEY SINGS FOLK SONGS FROM THE  
THREE LAURELS is the best Folk Music re-  
cord I have ever heard. Obroy Ramsey is  
not only an excellent singer but a sur-  
prisingly talented banjo player. Usually  
a performer in the folk music field (Earl  
Scruggs, Billy Faier, etc) is gifted with  
a good singing voice or a knack for in-  
strumental work but seldom do you find a  
folk musician equally talented in both ex-  
pressions and never one who is a master of  
the two. Obroy Ramsey is definitely the  
exception to this rule. I'm sure after  
listening to this LP that Mr. Ramsey could  
be a success at singing with no accompani-  
ment whatsoever or at doing strictly in-  
strumental work. Of his singing John  
Jacob Niles had this to say in the JOURNAL  
OF AMERICAN FOLKLORE, April-June 1958,  
"Obroy Ramsey's singing even approaches  
bel cante." If you listen closely to his  
banjo playing you'll hear a lick that  
sounds like George Pegram and maybe a lick  
that sounds like Earl Scruggs but what  
you're actually hearing is a unique style  
of 3 finger banjo picking that Obroy has  
developed himself and which no one has  
ever approached or succeeded in imitating.  
The melody seems to flow out in a smooth  
stream amidst a tasteful backup and every  
lead note always manages to emerge flaw-  
lessly. I think I could best describe Mr.  
Ramsey's playing by calling it a way of  
singing. His banjo sings up and down and

around and is actually an instrumental imitation of his own voice. I've never heard an instrument and a voice blend together so well. This LP isn't a crude, noisy folk music record like so many of the mountain music records on the market. It seems popular taste in "Folk Music Listening" demands a harsh, screaming "ethnic" singer beating a banjo as fast as he can and making as much noise as he can. This LP is definitely not of that type. It is a finished product and anyone who questions Obray Ramsey's authenticity doesn't know anything about folk music and especially doesn't know anything about their cherished term "ethnic." Obray's approach to folk music is simply this, in his own words, "I don't like crude music and my people didn't like crude music." If being crude and rough and singing poorly is your idea of being ethnic than Obray isn't ethnic. He sings the songs the way he learned them from his mother, grandmother, uncles, and friends when he was a boy, and plays them the way he sings them and if this is being "ethnic," than Obray is ethnic.

Obray Ramsey was born in a log cabin in Andy Cove at the foot of Walnut Mountain on Sept. 24, 1913. Andy Cove lies between the French Broad River and Big Laurel and at the time of his boyhood this area was probably the wildest and roughest country in the U.S. This Laurel country, consisting of Big Laurel, Little Laurel, and Shelton Laurel, is

responsible for the old mountaineer legends now popular today of "Feudin' & Fighting" "Corn Likker" and "Revenooers" and Obray can relate endless tales of bloodshed and murder he remembers from his earlier years. When he was a boy it was dangerous to even ride a horse down the road and sure death to be unarmed. He tells the story of his great uncle, a fine mountain fiddler, who was ambushed on the road, taken to a cabin and forced at gunpoint to play the fiddle all night. His captives set a jug of corn whiskey in front of him and told him to play until they got tired of listening. He finally managed to escape at dawn amidst a thunder of hog rifles.

At a very young age Obray had decided he wanted to be a good singer, being strongly influenced from a long family tradition of singing. His 3rd cousin, Matthew Ramsey, was known to be the best singer around and was lead singer in a choir which consisted of Obray's mother and two of Obray's aunts, Matthew's brother and 1st cousin. When Obray was 8 years old he tried to get his father to buy him a fiddle but the tobacco crop didn't sell high enough that year or the next and so at the age of 10 he found himself learning to play an old guitar. He learned songs such as WILD BILL JONES and BLACKJACK DAVY from an uncle who loved to drink and sing and play the banjo, and learned songs such as WAGONERS LAD, GEORGE COLLINS, RAIN AND SNOW, I'LL NOT MARRY AT ALL, BATTLE OF KING'S MOUNTAIN and ONIE

WISE from "Old Man Will" Shelton, a colorful old man 85 years old with a long white beard and a fantastic talent for singing. The old man was well known in that region for his habit of getting drunk and singing so loud and clear he could be heard for miles around and seducing young girls by the sheer virtue of the hypnotic effect of his voice. The merits of a sharp, clear singing voice were impressed on Obray from the time he was old enough to talk, and to this day he refuses to sing a song any other way. In his own words, "If I had to make crude music to sell records I'd quit. I play 'cause I love to play whether there's any money to be made or not." He strongly disapproves of people who play crudely and clown around trying to sell themselves. Obray's banjo playing, like his singing, is sharp, clear, and precise, and he partly attributes this to the influence of a mountaineer neighbor of his childhood called Lemuel Norton. Lem Norton played what Obray calls "sweet banjo" and during the last 10 years of his life he and Obray spent many long evenings making music together, Obray playing the guitar and Lem the banjo. As a result of influences such as these and the exceptional musical talents which had always been present in Obray's ancestral heritage, Obray Ramsey has emerged as the finest traditional American Folk music performer on record today.

Mel Lyman  
Marshall, No. Car.

(EDITORS' COLUMN cont. from page 2)

Congratulations to newlyweds Alan Lomax and Antoinette Marchand ... BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING US! Ewan MacColl has been refused a visa by the State Department and will be unable to perform on a scheduled concert tour of this country. No specific grounds were given for denial of the visa. MacColl's manager, Paul Endicott, says that the only difference in MacColl's position since last year is that he has been "a very active and publicized chairman of the British Committee to Defend Pete Seeger." MacColl's partner, Peggy Seeger, will continue the concert tour alone. Peggy, who received rave notices on her Canadian tour the first two weeks of October, is currently playing the Music Box Theater in Los Angeles with The New Lost City Ramblers. Mike Seeger performs both with the Ramblers and with his sister. ... A Nat Hentoff article entitled THE RISE OF FOLK MUSIC appearing in THE COMMONWEALTH designates LSR as "the apoplectic conscience of the folk industry." Really? ... Honest Harry Strikes Back! (from an interview printed in the St. Paul DISPATCH) Reporter: "Mr. Belafonte, a folk singer named Ramblin' Jack Elliott said recently in Newsweek magazine that you are just the pretty boy of the folk singers. How do you feel about that?" Belafonte: "Who's Ramblin' Jack Elliott? I never read Newsweek magazine. I guess there's a few million people who don't agree with him... Of course, there are a lot of people who (concluded page 40) 45

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER....

(\* denotes to be reviewed in LSR)

The Chad Mitchell Trio: MIGHTY DAY ON CAMPUS (Kapp 1262) For undergrads only.

The Brothers Four :THE BROTHERS FOUR SONGBOOK (Columbia 1697) Merde.

\*BOB GIBSON AND BOB CAMP AT THE GATE OF HORN (Elektra 207) Quality niteclub music.

\*MEMPHIS SLIM'S TRIBUTE (Candid 8023)

\*JUDY COLLINS (Elektra 209)

\*Robert Johnson: KING OF THE DELTA BLUES SINGERS (Columbia 1654) Invaluable reprint.

Smith Brothers:SONGS OF THE CIVIL WAR (International Award Series 171)

Charleston Trio: AMERICANA (International Award Series 179)

\*Memphis Slim: NO STRAIN (Bluesville1031)

Lonnie Donegan has a new album on Dot. Lead song is, of course, DOES YOUR CHEWING GUM LOSE ITS FLAVOR ON THE BEDPOST...

Dauphin Trio: MOVIN' ON (Epic)

The Kingston Trio: CLOSE UP (Capitol 1642) Debut of newcomer John Stewart.

The Limelitters: THE SLIGHTLY FABULOUS LIMELITERS (RCA-Victor) The song that's selling, this album is a steal from the Clancy brothers.

The legendary Cowboy Howard Vokes (see LSR #4) has a couple of EPs out on Del-Ray -- his own label.

\*Rosalie Sorrels: ROSALIE'S SONGBAG (Prestige International 13025)

\*The Gardners: THE GARDNERS, INTERNATIONAL SONG ARTISTS (Prestige 13022)

Mormon Tabernacle Choir: SONGS OF

THE NORTH AND SOUTH (Columbia 6259)

Rosalie Sorrels: SONGS OF THE MORMON PIONEERS (Festival 2582-3) Double set.

Jimmie Rodgers: THE BEST OF JIMMIE RODGERS' FOLK TUNES (Roulette 25160)

Alfred Deller: THE CRUEL MOTHER (Vanguard 1073) Classic counter-tenor.

\*Mance Lipscomb: TROUBLE IN MIND (Reprise 2012) Negro "songster" recorded by Mack McCormick. On Sinatra's label!

\*A. L. Lloyd: A SELECTION FROM THE PENGUIN BOOK OF ENGLISH FOLK SONGS (Folk-Lyric 121) Originally released by Collector Records in England; one of Lloyd's best.

\*George & Gerry Armstrong: SIMPLE GIFTS (Folkways 2335) Chicago husband and wife.

\*Stanley Triggs: BUNKHOUSE AND FORECASTLE SONGS OF THE NORTHWEST (Folkways 3569)

\*Sam Larner: NOW IS THE TIME FOR FISHING (Folkways 3507) English field singer recorded by Ewan MacColl & Peggy Seeger.

\*THE ORANGEMEN OF ULSTER (Folkways 3003) Recorded in Northern Ireland by Samuel Charters.

\*LUCY STEWART (Folkways 3519) First of a series of Scottish field recordings by Kenneth S. Goldstein. This one is Child Ballads, sung by a traditional artist.

\*THE CIVIL WAR THROUGH ITS SONGS AND BALLADS (Heirloom 503) F. Warner, B. Bonyun

\*Upcoming in the next few months from Prestige are: on International series -- Tommy Hunter's Carolina String Band; MOUNTAIN MUSIC (13026); TOSSI AARON(13027); Robert Beers: THE ART OF THE PSALTERY

(13028); Peggy, Penny, and Barbara Seeger: THE THREE SISTERS (13029); CHARLOTTE DANIELS & PAT WEBB (13037); Ed McCurdy: AN ANTIDOTE AGAINST MELANCHOLY (13044); RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT (13033); On Bluesville -- Sidney Maiden: TROUBLE AN' BLUES (1035); Furry Lewis: A MUSICAL DOCUMENTARY Volumes I & II (1036-7); Mercy Dee Walton: PITY AND A SHAME (1039); Blind Willie McTell: LAST SESSIONS (1040); Henry Townsend: TIRED OF BEING MISTREATED (1041); Brownie and Sonny: BROWNIE'S BLUES (1042); Tampa Red: DON'T JIVE ME (1043); and Lonnie Johnson: LONNIE JOHNSON AND VICTORIA SPIVEY (1044). Ken Goldstein also promises albums soon by Texas Gladden, Hobart Smith, and many, many others.

\*Future Folkways Events (in no particular order): A Cisco Houston's kids album; Roscoe Holcomb; a fiddler's contest rec. by Mike Seeger; a Lilly Brothers bluegrass LP recorded by Mike Seeger; more Leadbelly by Ramsey; Hootenanny volume III; More Pete Seeger; two albums of traditional singers from Arkansas and Virginia; four albums of Jean Ritchie and one Scots field trip LP recorded by her; the Harvesters; blues from Jazz Gillum; Volume Two of Songs of the Spanish Civil War; a recorded study of vocal styles by Alan Lomax; a documentary called SHARECROPPER'S STORY; the Chicago Folk Festival featuring Horton Barker; a MacColl-Peggy Seeger BroadSides LP; Steel Bands recorded by Gene Bluestein; a field recording of traditional banjo

playing; blues from Champion Jack Dupree; Dick Cameron; Irish pub music; blues by Big Joe Williams; a disc by Roosevelt Sykes; more Woody Guthrie sometime in the future; a Story of the Blues series by Charters; a Blues Styles series by Charles Edward Smith; and much more entertaining and artistically and historically valuable material!

\*Israel Kaplan: WHEN I WAS A BOY IN BROOKLYN (Folkways 3501) Folklore in the city streets.

\*Ella Jenkins: THIS IS RHYTHM (Folkways 7652) Educational disc.

\*Champion Jack Dupree: WOMAN BLUES (Folkways 3825) Blues old-timer.

\*The New Lost City Ramblers have an EP out on the Folkways label. Songs: FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP, MILWAUKEE BLUES, TALKING HARD LUCK, and WAVES ON THE SEA. \$1.49

\*The McPEAKE FAMILY OF BELFAST (Prestige International 13018) The best record yet on the International series.

\*Jack Elliott: WOODY GUTHRIE'S SONGS TO GROW ON (Folkways 7501) The next best thing to Woody himself. First rate.

\*Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs: SONGS OF THE FAMOUS CARTER FAMILY (Columbia 1664) Earl picks the git-tar, Maybelle Carter accompanies on autoharp.

\*Vanguard has promised a Cisco Houston LAST SESSIONS set of songs and talk.

\*DAVE VAN RONK SINGS (Folkways 2383) Vol II

\*Neil Duddy: THE DONEGAL PIPER (Folkways 3551)



Verve has released a Sister Rosetta Tharpe album (3005), and has issued a smaller version of its 5 volume BIG BILL BROONZY STORY as BIG BILL BROONZY'S LAST SESSIONS (3001-3). This set contains all the songs of the large set -- without the conversation -- in three discs.

Burl Ives: MANHATTAN BALLADEER (United Artists 3145) An odd mixture of folk music and Irving Berlin songs, this one's made up of leftovers from Burl's first two waxings for UA.

\*Harry Oster has released a PRIMITIVE PIANO album on Folk-Lyric. Their new address, by the way, is 1945 Bay Street, Baton Rouge 2, La. Write for a catalogue.

\* \* \* \* \*

BLUEGRASS AND OLD TIMEY musicians will be intrigued by the following bit of information passed on to us by Wedgely Todd: On October 6, 1952, the Hungarian Communist newspaper ESTI BUDAPEST branded guitars, mandolins, and banjos as "reactionary instruments," and recommended that they be purged from Hungarian orchestras.

Speaking of Todd, your LSR editors are proud to announce that they have signed an exclusive contract to manage him through the spring of 1967. The irrepressible Wedgely is continuing his experimentation with American folk art forms, and is currently expressing himself by tap dancing while playing Bluegrass banjo. He intends to work this into his night club act -- along with his simultaneous piano and mouth harp playing. Watch for him in your area!

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

O. J. ABBOTT: IRISH AND BRITISH SONGS FROM THE OTTAWA VALLEY (Folkways 4051)

An eighty-five year old traditional ballad singer from Canada allows us an invaluable peek at an important and pure aspect of musical tradition on this continent. Recorded by Edith Fowke.

FRANK WARNER: SONGS OF THE CIVIL WAR (Prestige International 13012)

The songs of the North and South are here given delightful validity by an old master, Frank Warner, and his two sons. Easily the best album of Civil War songs we've ever heard.

JACK ELLIOTT: JACK ELLIOTT SINGS THE SONGS OF WOODY GUTHRIE

(Prestige International 13016)  
In his first American album, Jack, the redoubtable Brooklyn Okie, gives us the greatest batch of Guthrie songs since Woody himself was forced to hang up his guitar. An absolute must for Guthrie admirers and a most essential addition for students of the city folksinging scene. Lomax says, "I'd rather listen to Jack than any of the other young people."

LSR #18 will include a country music round-up: detailed analysis of the Star-day Records line, a Bill Monroe Record Classic, what's available, plus much more.

# LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

no. 18

Har 20015 <sup>4</sup>  
30c

3220 Park Avenue South  
Minneapolis 7, Minnesota

*The* FOLK RECORD MONTHLY



For complete record reviews and listings each and every month of the year -- plus the best in "free-wheeling iconoclasm" and "rapier-like thrusts," subscribe to the now famous LSR. \$3.00 yearly.

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THE LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW

ADULT ROOM

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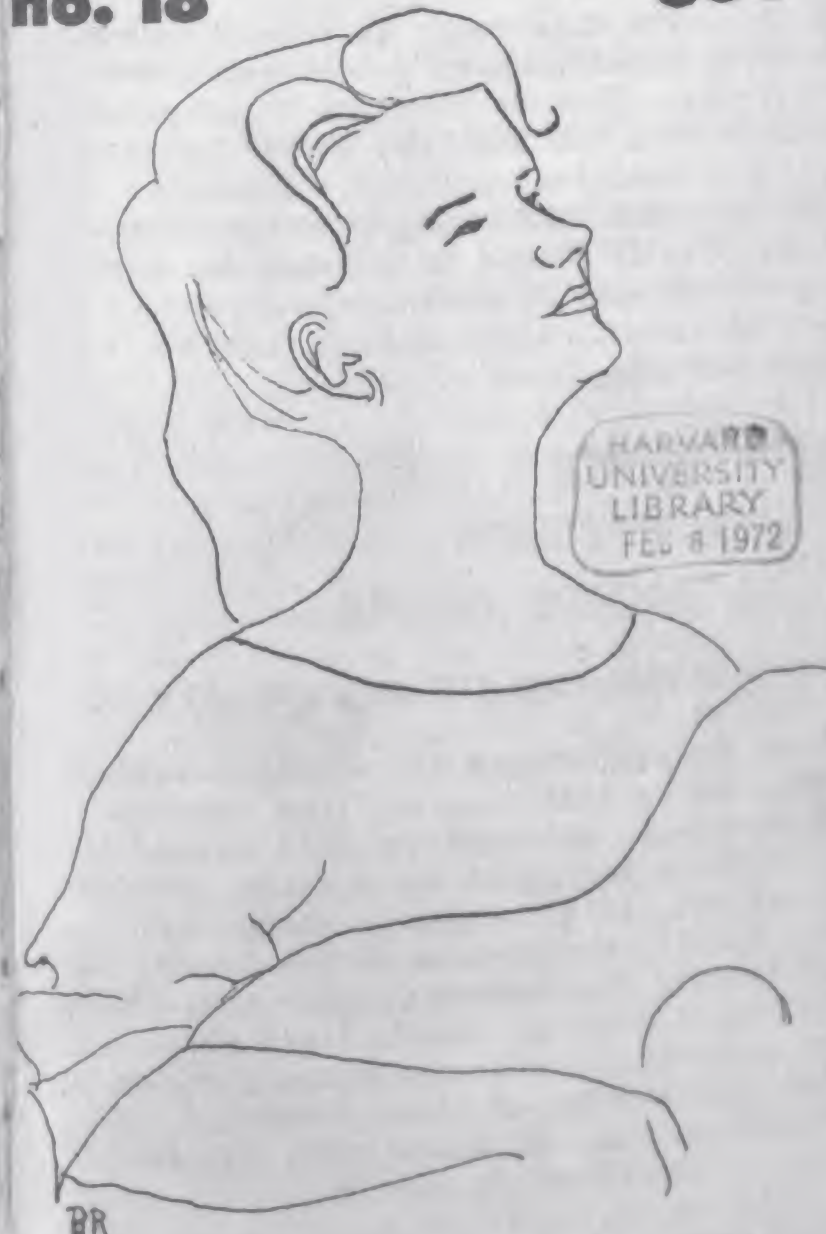
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**THE LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW**

POETRY ROOM

On our cover this month is Bonnie Dobson, a charming Canadian-born folksinger whose initial solo album on Prestige International (SHE'S LIKE THE SWALLOW, 13021) has received much critical acclaim. Bonnie's second LP (DEAR COMPANION, Prestige International 13031) should be out any day now. Young Miss Dobson is definitely a performer to watch. Cover drawing is by Barbara Rauhala.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

## EDITORS' COLUMN

## EDITORS' COLUMN

*BY JON PARKAKE & PAUL NELSON*

Howdy, folks, here we are again, bouncy, brassy, and as late as ever! Our Country Music Round-up, promised for this issue, has had to be postponed for a while, but, rest assured, it'll be coming along real soon. So will the reviews of the Lomax-Peter Kennedy five-volume Caedmon set, THE FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN. Sandy Paton will serve as guest reviewer for these glorious albums ... Speaking of Lomax, Prestige International has set a tentative release  
(continued on page 34)

Readers whose subscriptions run out with this issue will find an "X" marked in the box to the lower right. Three dollars will bring you 12 more shiny issues. LSR, 3220 Park Ave. So., Mpls. 7.

## \* \* \* RECORD REVIEWS \* \* \*

### JOAN BAEZ, Volume 2 (Vanguard 9094)

To Joan Baez's numerous and fervent fans, LSR's review of her first Vanguard album (in which we reached the conclusion that Joan is an enormously gifted but definitely misguided singer of folk songs) was an act of villainy. Quit picking on Joan, we were told. Go back to beating your grandmothers with old Library of Congress albums. Nevertheless, here we are again -- sneering, leering evilly, and twirling our greasy moustaches -- to cast a jaundiced eye at Joan's second solo album.

To begin benevolently, we were pleased by the three songs on the album that are most likely to appall Joan's fandom: BANKS OF THE OHIO, ENGINE 143, and LITTLE DARLING PAL OF MINE. On these few titles, Joan not only steps down from her pedestal but kicks off her shoes in the process, good-naturedly employing a bit of country dialect ("I asked mah luv to take a wawk...") and singing from her throat, in the traditional manner, rather than from her diaphragm, in the classic trained manner, to produce a trio of sweet and understated performances, the best of which is the Sara Carter-style solo, ENGINE 143. The accompaniments of the Greenbriar Boys, a New York City bluegrass band, on OHIO and PAL blend nicely with Joan's "country" voice (which, by the way, combines much of the clarity of the singing of Sara Carter with the sweetness of the young Jeanie West). The Greenbriars

unfortunately disappear from the remainder of the album and Joan reverts to her accustomed vocalizing on the other 11 numbers, only one of which (Joan's simplification of the art song, PLAISIR D'AMOUR) is not at odds with her singing style. The interest of the folk song fan will disappear right along with the Greenbriars and Joan's subdued vocal styling.

For the sake of clarity, let us concede that Joan is perhaps the most thrilling young voice of our time. Her natural gifts of tonal purity, effortless vibrato, and unerring pitch and projection are the qualities labored for, but seldom achieved by formal singers. But these enormous vocal gifts, when undisciplined by the bounds that tradition places on the true folksinger, just prove too rich and too grandiose to carry the simplicity of the humble folk song. The nature of folk music is in its very limitations, and when these are exceeded, by intent or by accident, the basic character of the music is altered, and its energy spilled out onto the ground.

Take as a case in point Joan's singing here of OLD BLUE. It is a thrilling, exquisitely ethereal, and delicate vocal display. To accept it as a countryman's lament for his dead dog would be, of course, impossible and ludicrous. Accepting it as an expression of Joan Baez's feelings about a countryman's loss of his dog, one finds her statement so far removed from the reality of the

central image, the nature of her statement so alien to the nature of the thought, that the song ceases to exist as anything but a figment of the singer's imagination, sung in limbo. And such is not the stuff of folk music. The same analysis might be applied to Joan's BARBARA ALLEN -- which is again a vocal tour de force, but completely unbelievable when compared to dozens of other performances by traditional singers, few of whom can boast so much as half of Joan's raw potential and ability, but all of whom subordinate themselves to the demands of the song, singing it as centuries of performers before them have done, polishing it with love and understanding into a genuine work of art.

In an age where the criterion of excellence in popular singing is largely one of detachment, vacuity, and offhandedness, it is not difficult to understand why many young people are drawn to Joan's singing, with its obviously heartfelt intensity and intellectual preoccupation with its material. When this same personal intensity is applied to a folk song by a traditional singer (the names of Texas Gladden, Leadbelly, and Woody Guthrie come to mind) or by a city singer who has learned the traditional vocal disciplines (Ewan MacColl or Peggy Seeger), the result is overwhelming vocal art: music which tells not only of the depths of the singer but of the most basic nature of his land and his people. Joan Baez can tell us only of herself, for she is unwilling or unable to concede anything

to her material. In molding it to her powerful personality, she destroys it.

If LSR seems to pick on Joan and single her out for undue criticism, it can be attributed to our impatience, for we feel that there is no reason why this remarkable girl cannot become a wonderful city folksinger -- perhaps, in time, our country's greatest. There is little doubt that one day Joan will become a part of folk music, just as folk music now seems to be a part of her. Folksinging is a way of life -- a very patient one, measured in decades, lifetimes, and generations. Joan is only twenty years old. Her true greatness lies not in the present but in the future, and hinges on her willingness to learn the nature of her country and its people and the music they have brought forth from themselves and from their heritage.

**TOM KINES: SONGS FROM SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS AND POPULAR SONGS OF SHAKESPEARE'S TIME (Folkways 8767)**

Shakespearian scholars should appreciate this album, sung by Tom Kines, with harpsicord, cello, and recorder accompaniment. Art song fans may want to take a listen, too. All the rest of us will probably want "to steer clear of (Will Shakespeare's) swimmy waters."

Subscribe to LSR today! Send \$3.00 to 3220 Park Ave. South, Minneapolis 7, Minn.

**THE McPEAKE FAMILY OF BELFAST (Prestige International 13018)**

This record (co-produced by Kenneth S. Goldstein and Ewan MacColl, and recorded by Ewan MacColl) of an Irish vocal and instrumental trio, the McPeake Family of Belfast, is the best album yet on Prestige's new International series. It is so good that it is likely to remain the best for quite some time.

Francis McPeake, Sr., a 76-year-old uilleann piper, and his two sons, Francis, Jr., (also a piper) and James (who plays the Irish harp) are a thoroughly delightful trio that can perhaps best be described as sounding like an "ethnic Clancy Brothers." Their music, which is as sentimental and beautiful as Ireland itself, has that rock-solid air of true tradition, along with the gaiety and magic of a laughing Irish Puck.

Although some jaded collectors have called the McPeakes "untraditional" because they use the uilleann pipes as a melodic accompaniment to their vocals (Irish folksongs are traditionally sung unaccompanied and the pipes are used only to play tunes and are never sung with) and often employ sometimes strikingly modern and offbeat harmonies, one touch of the needle to this record will soon set your fears to rest. It is impossible to imagine any folksong critic who would not be completely engrossed and tremendously moved by this truly beautiful singing and playing.

The McPeakes sing and play through a varied program of English, Scottish, and Irish folksongs -- sung solo and ensemble, accompanied and unaccompanied -- in truly inspiring fashion. The old ballads, sung against the irregular droning background of the pipes, leaving the singer rhythmically free to decorate, are breathtaking (and reminiscent of A. L. Lloyd's use of the concertina in some of his loveliest numbers). The faster songs employ the harp as a rhythmic instrument, capturing the old-timey "swing" of rural Irish dance music. The singing is never less than superb.

Goldstein and MacColl have produced an outstanding album of Irish music, one of the best records of the year. Everyone must have this disc.

JACK ELLIOTT: (Woody Guthrie's) SONGS TO GROW ON (Folkways 7501)

Woody Guthrie's children's songs are timeless and will live forever. Here they are sung by Jack Elliott, an early disciple of Guthrie's, and a man who has mastered all the stylistic nuances and profundities required to bring them to full life. The result is an LP which will be lovingly worn to a nubbin within a matter of days by any listener at all interested in Guthrie.

Most of Guthrie's SONGS TO GROW ON are "action" songs -- crammed full of activity

and motion, pictorially vivid, filled with fascinating phrases, noises, and things for kids to do. Like good games, they are kept basic and simple. Both children and adults find them good fun and soon fall under their magic. CAR CAR SONG and COME SEE are good examples.

In some of his "deeper" children's songs, Guthrie has captured, with striking poetic imagery, the essence and wonderment of children and the American dream of innocence. These songs (CLEAN-O and MY LITTLE SEED are two of them) fairly ring with the idyllicism of childhood, yet remain perfect and profound philosophical statements on the great and good things of life. They are stated with a simplicity that only a genius could muster. These songs are warm, cosy, and easy to live with; yet are not light or inconsequential. One can't poke fun at them -- they firmly resist cynicism. They embrace some of the most honestly sentimental and wonderful emotions of all of us, and we feel sorry for anyone who cannot be deeply moved by them.

The notes to this album contain a whole page of Woody's matchless prose, an 8½ x 11 photograph, some fine Guthrie drawings, and his credo for writing children's songs. The disc is dedicated to the memory of his daughter, Cathy Ann "Stackabones" Guthrie. We suggest you pick it up today.

Woody's second book, AMERICAN FOLKSONG, has been reprinted by Oak Publications, 121 W. 47th St., N. Y. 36 (\$1.95). Also see the December issue of CLIMAX: article on W.W.G.

ROBERT JOHNSON: KING OF THE DELTA BLUES  
SINGERS (Columbia 1654)

This is exactly the kind of record blues collectors used to dream about. ("What I'd do if I owned Columbia!"). The current blues revival has brought to reality what seemed an idle, hopeless dream just a couple of years ago. Here is a whole LP, 16 uncut selections, a legitimate re-issue of a major portion of the work of one of the greatest and most obscure of recorded country blues singers.

Some high-level scholarship by Columbia's staff has corrected many distorted ideas as to who Johnson was. As far as can be determined, he grew up on a plantation in the delta country of Mississippi, and had rarely, if ever, left his home until a salesman for a low-priced record outfit, passing through the area, discovered him and took him to San Antonio to record. According to the man who recorded him, Johnson was "seventeen or eighteen years old" at the time. A year later he was recorded again, in Dallas, but when the promoter of the famous SPIRITUALS TO SWING concerts, having heard the records, tried to find Johnson for the 1938 concert, he discovered after much effort that Johnson was dead, poisoned by a jealous woman. Thus Johnson, who has generally been considered to have been much older than he apparently was, is placed in the same generation with Muddy Waters and John Lee Hooker, but whereas these men developed

slowly (Waters learning partly from Johnson's records) and were in their thirties before they became first-rank performers, Johnson developed tremendously while he was still in his teens, and then was snuffed out on the threshold of an indubitably great career.

The title "King of the Delta Blues Singers" gives an idea of Johnson's magnitude as a blues artist, but is perhaps a misnomer for this youth who spent virtually all of his life on an isolated plantation, known to outsiders only as a name on a few records. Muddy Waters, who grew up only a few miles from Johnson's home, never saw him. The recording engineers describe him as a very shy young man, nervous about playing in public. What we have here is not a veteran professional such as the "King" title might suggest, but a wild, excited youth, still in the process of discovery, and bringing with him a genius for communication, and a fabulous primitive style, fully developed in an isolated environment which can never again be duplicated. What we have here is an irreplaceable ethnic document, and the only one of its kind: at no other time has a young singer of such genius, and possessing such pure style, been recorded so extensively on first-class equipment.

As is usually the case with Mississippi singers, most if not all of these songs are Johnson's own compositions. Some of them are well-worked-out, like Muddy Waters'



songs; others have more of an improvisatory sound, like John Lee Hooker's. All of them are remarkable for the rich and evocative poetry of the lyrics, far more so than either Waters' or Hooker's. Probably the best-known song on the disc is the WALKING BLUES, a very distinctive piece also recorded by Muddy Waters (Library of Congress AAFS L 4, as COUNTRY BLUES, probably learned from Johnson's record) and the legendary Delta singer, Son House (Origin OJL-2, with somewhat different lyrics, as MY BLACK MAMA). Johnson's version is easily the greatest. Nearly every song on this disc is as good or better.

Johnson has a fervent, high-pitched delivery, and a fantastic ability to project. He compels you to listen to what he has to say. The guitar accompaniment is rich and brilliant, carrying the Delta bottle-neck style to heights unmatched by anyone else on records.

Columbia's production is beyond criticism. The notes are masterfully done, and there is a comprehensive selection from the lyrics. (Johnson's singing is clear enough so a complete transcription is not necessary for the average listener). The recordings, made in hotel rooms and offices, are amazingly clear, brilliant, and lifelike for their time and place, and will give no listener cause for complaint. Producer-editor Frank Driggs

(continued on page 15)

Have you men gotten your ORIGIN JAZZ LIBRARY records yet? Their first one was CHARLIE PATTON (Origin 1), a widely praised, seldom heard Clarksdale, Miss., blues singer. The second is REALLY! THE COUNTRY BLUES (Origin 2), 14 never before issued sides by the first generation of country blues singers. All blues collectors must have these records. They'll soon release SAM COLLINS AND HENRY THOMAS (Origin 3). How do you get them? Easy. Just send \$4.98 for each LP to Origin Jazz Library, 39 Remsen Street (1E), Brooklyn Heights 1, New York.





## Folk-Lyric Records

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**A GARLAND OF SCOTS FOLKSONG: BETSY MILLER AND EWAN MACCOLL.** Solos and duets in the open-throated grand style of Scots singing, performed by Ewan MacColl and his mother. FL 116 \$4.98

**ROBERT BURNS: THE MERRY MUSES OF CALEDONIA, SUNG BY EWAN MACCOLL.** Bawdy songs collected or written by Robert Burns, presented in a scholarly unexpurgated album. Included with the record is a book with complete texts and extensive notes. Limited edition, available by subscription to scholars and libraries. Distributed by Folk-Lyric, manufactured by Dionysus Records. D 1 \$8.95

**PRIMITIVE PIANO.** Speckled Red, Billy Pierce, James Robinson, and Doug Suogs. Old-time barrelhouse piano and pun-gently outspoken city blues. FL 117 \$4.98

**BAYOU BLUEGRASS: THE LOUISIANA HONEYDRIPPERS.** Led by banjoist Jim Smoak, who has played with such topflight country music bands as those of Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs, the Louisiana Honeydrippers perform a varied program with emphasis on the folksongs of the Deep South. FL 122 \$4.98

**BOLL WEEVIL AND BOSSMAN BLUES.** Roosevelt Charles, Otis Webster, and others. In these blues which grew out of the fading cotton economy the singers express in grim or comic irony the underlying feelings of colored sharecroppers. To be issued February, 1962.

**PEGGY SEEGER: POPULAR BALLADS.** Ancient ballads which originated in England and Scotland. FL 120 \$4.98

**HOT BLUES: SMOKY BABE AND HIS FRIENDS.** Vigorous colorful country blues, recorded in their natural setting, accompanied by guitar, harmonica, and stamping feet. DOWN BEAT found Smoky "impressive" in his appearance in Country Negro Jam Sessions. FL 118 \$4.98

(continued from page 12)

deserves the gratitude of all blues fans for a superb job.

Let us hope that the blues revival is strong enough to produce a halfway encouraging sale for this disc. Columbia controls probably the largest collection of old blues records on earth, including more than 200 sides by Big Bill Broonzy in his prime, as well as the best work of Bukka White, Memphis Minnie, Blind Boy Fuller, Blind Willie Johnson, Leroy Carr, Peg Leg Howell and many more, not to mention the earliest high-quality recordings of Leadbelly, Josh White, Sonny Terry, and Brownie McGhee. You get the message! (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

**THE HODGES BROTHERS: WATERMELON HANGIN' ON THE VINE (Arhoolie 5001)**

Collector Chris Strachwitz, known primarily for his work in documenting old-time blues singers, steps into the country music field with this recording of a Mississippi fiddle-guitar-mandolin-bass string-band called the Hodges Brothers. While the boys are not the "naturals" that many of Strachwitz's blues singers are, and are not strangers to backwoods radio and recording studios, they produce a hearty brand of music somewhere between that of the glossy professional and the rawboned field musician. The album contains a wide selection of numbers: standards such as BILE DEM CABBAGE DOWN, LONESOME VALLEY, MOUNTAIN

DEW, an hilarious CHARMIN' BETSY, a candid racial slur called HOOKNOSE IN TOWN, and some rousing instrumentals, the best of which is the hard-driving CARROLL COUNTY BLUES. Banjo fans may feel left out, but fiddle fanciers and old-time string-band bugs will welcome the Hodges Brothers into their record collections -- and await future Strachwitz ventures of this sort. The record is obtainable from Chris for \$5.00. Send to Box 671, Los Gatos, California.

ED McCURDY: A TREASURE CHEST OF AMERICAN FOLKSONG (EKL-205) A 2-LP set.

Elektra Records have gone out and created what they probably like to think of as a "folknik's Bible" in their copiously notated, authoritatively titled 2-LP set, A TREASURY OF AMERICAN FOLKSONG. "Created by Jac Holzman," this plush "Bonus Pak" 2-for-\$4.98 set of albums is sung by none other than Ed McCurdy, a likeable enough performer in his own right, but hardly the man to hold up all this "scholarship" or give any sort of validity to all the "theses" flying around about American folk music. Supported by Erik Darling's New York style banjo, Ed does surprisingly well with a lot of songs (TWO SISTERS, OLD VIRGINNY, DOWN IN THE VALLEY, SIMPLE GIFTS) but falls completely apart on others (BENEATH THE WILLOW, CARELESS LOVE, WILLIE THE WEEPER). His limita-

tions and superficialities are painfully apparent on HARD TRAVELIN' and LORD RANDAL. Thinking of TREASURE CHEST as a strictly McCurdy album, we would say it contains some of his best work since A BALLAD SINGER'S CHOICE (Tradition 1003). However, as a supposed work of scholarship, this record should be ignored.

REALLY! THE COUNTRY BLUES (Origin OJL-2)

The second production of Brooklyn's Origin Jazz Library is a brilliant collection of primitive blues recorded by 12 virtually unknown blues singers in the 1920's and early 1930's. These singers were not fortunate enough to be able to record for Victor, Okeh, Brunswick or Columbia, the major labels which could offer high-quality reproduction and a modicum of publicity and distribution. They recorded for Paramount, Gennett, and other midwestern outfits. The records were of poor quality to start with (technically speaking), and, since very few were made in most cases, they are now almost impossible to find, with surviving copies often in poor condition. Previous LP anthologies have largely avoided them, either because the editors could not obtain them, or because of the poor sound. The Origin Jazz Library, owned and operated by leading record collectors, has specialized in this type of material, which, despite the inferior sound, is invaluable to students and

collectors of traditional blues. For these recordings date from an era when primitive singers still supplied the chief musical entertainment for the great majority of Negroes of all ages throughout the South. They were made for sale to the Negro-on-the-street, not just for the older generation, or for white collectors. The singers were singing the music they made every day, not something old and special for special people. And they sang before the influence of radio and the very phonograph that preserved them had made their full impact upon the South.

A great variety of styles can be heard on this LP. Probably the most primitive is that of George "Bullet" Williams (TOUCH ME LIGHT MAMA), who gives us a real "holler" not unlike those recorded by Leadbelly, accompanied only by a harmonica. There are a couple of more sophisticated items, FRANCE BLUES by Sunny Boy with its "hey lawdy mama" chorus, and the UNDERTAKER BLUES by Buster Johnson, with string-band accompaniment. In between are guitarists in just about every pre-electric blues style, including knife (Sam Collins, JAIL HOUSE BLUES).

To mention the highlights in more detail: DEVIL GOT MY WOMAN, by Skip James, is a haunting chant consisting of one vocal line, repeated with minor variations and additions, to a rich and intricate guitar accompaniment which anticipates Lightnin' Hopkins', but is actually considerably

more complex. WOMAN WOMAN BLUES, by Ishman Bracey, is an 8-bar blues similar to KEY TO THE HIGHWAY, sung in a half-falsetto voice and accompanied on guitar in a style remarkable for the tension of its rhythms and for the astonishing but perfectly controlled use of discords. MY BLACK MAMA, by Son House, from Clarksdale, Mississippi, is a perfect example of the Clarksdale style later made famous in electrified form by Muddy Waters: this track has an uncanny resemblance to Waters' first record, COUNTRY BLUES, for the Library of Congress (AAFS L 4). OLD COUNTRY ROCK, by William Moore, a barber from Virginia, is a beguiling guitar solo. DON'T EASE ME IN, by Henry Thomas, is a high-spirited piece worthy of Leadbelly. Also included are MAGGIE CAMPBELL BLUES by Tommy Jackson, COTTONFIELD BLUES by Garfield Akers, and TELL ME MAN BLUES by Henry Sims and Charlie Patton, each an outstanding primitive performance.

No lyrics are included, but they are promised for future publication. (Transcribing them is certainly a major task!). The notes are of the hard-sell variety (is this necessary on a record rarely sold in stores?) and can be dispensed with, but the record (which is what counts, after all) is unsurpassed as a blues anthology and belongs on every blues shelf. The disc, a "Limited Edition," can be had for \$4.98, postpaid, from Origin Jazz Library, 39 Remsen St. (1E), Brooklyn Heights 1, New York.  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

DAVE VAN RONK SINGS (Folkways 2383) Vol. 2.

Van Ronk is another of the burgeoning group of young white guitarist-singers who have been drawn toward the blues. Here he does an interesting selection of folk and pseudo-folk songs, with quite a bit of blues. The program is bristling with great but unhackneyed songs.

Van Ronk's violent delivery is especially well suited to the blues, and he does BED BUG BLUES, HESITATION BLUES, HOOTCHY KOOTCHY MAN, and several others of that ilk with real verve and a great feeling for the music. He also gets along very well with a Cab Calloway-style delivery of WILLIE THE WEEPER, and with the risqué hit of the 1930's, (The Duck's) YAS YAS YAS. Some of the numbers, however, do not ring true. Van Ronk's strident manner is out of place in DINK'S SONG and TELL OLD BILLY, and most listeners will probably prefer the less violent, more subtly emotional originals of SEE THAT MY GRAVE IS KEPT CLEAN (Blind Lemon Jefferson) and SPIKE DRIVER BLUES (Mississippi John Hurt), both in Volume 3 of the Folkways Anthology. In RIVER COME DOWN, advertised as "a bit of Caribbean Haiku," Van Ronk makes excessive use of a flatted seventh, in the unmistakable manner of the Kingston Trio, although it is really not too bad a number. Neither is GEORGIE AND THE I.R.T., a New York City counterpart of the M.T.A., although some of the more faithful among

us will perhaps resent Van Ronk's merciless kidding of the Carter Family (ENGINE 143) in this song.

Van Ronk has a superb command of the guitar, tending more toward imitation of the various standard folk styles than to any noticeable unorthodoxy. The program has its high spots and low spots, but it represents some of the best coffeehouse singing we are likely to hear for some time (at least until Mike Russo is recorded). It can be highly recommended for 45 minutes of entertainment.  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

SAM HINTON: WHOEVER SHALL HAVE SOME PEANUTS (Folkways 7530)

Sam Hinton has given us another album hot on the heels of his mediocre SONG OF MEN effort for Folkways last month. This one, bland as can be, is a children's disc, and we here at LSR judge this type of record purely by how good the singer in point (whether it be Hinton, Ives, McCurdy, Mills, Glazer, etc.) can make animal noises. It's that kind of album, folks.

Somehow the sound of Hinton singing his guts out on something like FROGGIE WENT A' COURTIN' seems akin in paradox to the Salvation Army blasting out SILENT NIGHT with two trumpets and a tamborine on some street corner. No disrespect intended, but is this really religion, one wonders. Album rating: 1½ peanuts. (Reviewer: Buck Duane)

MOLLY SCOTT: WAITIN' ON YOU  
(Prestige International 13022)  
THE BEST OF CYNTHIA GOODING  
(Prestige International 13010)

Molly Scott, an attractive young actress with a flair for presenting folk songs in club and concert, offers here a diverse collection of numbers varying in effect from highly mediocre to commendably successful. Of special note are her unaccompanied performances (a daring feat in itself for a city singer) of two Negro spirituals apparently learned from Folkways and Library of Congress documentary recordings, WAITIN' ON YOU and LOW DOWN DEATH. These are sung with a surprising vibrancy, openness, warmth, and awareness -- yet are restrained from becoming the showpieces such songs generally turn into at the hands of less knowledgeable sopranos. These well-worked-out and obviously heartfelt performances are so markedly superior to the rest of Molly's repertoire one suspects they may be the music nearest and dearest to the performer.

The ballads and love songs (KATY CRUEL, WHO'S GONNA SHOE, COME ALL YE FAIR AND TENDER LADIES, etc.) are all sung in a straightforward, conventional, and generally uninteresting style. On them, Molly might well be that girl everyone seems to know, the pretty one who loves to sing the sad, sweet old songs quietly and somewhat artlessly to herself. It is nice,

however, to hear her singing a superior and vastly neglected ballad, THE JEALOUS BROTHERS (which Molly calls SEAPORT TOWN), and she is doing well to introduce this song into the repertoires of city singers. Likewise the hillbilly blues, SUN'S GONNA SHINE, a song which carries the type of simplistic message needed in these times. If this album is an unspectacular one, it is by the same token a healthy and appealing one -- for it is always a welcome thing to hear a professional girl singer gifted with a good voice who does not feel compelled to combine the songs of the country with the vocal techniques of a Patrice Munsel or worse.

If Molly Scott represents the warm but artless amateur in folk music, Cynthia Gooding certainly carries the banner for the cold, sophisticated, arty professional. THE BEST OF CYNTHIA GOODING is a record which really does not come under our auspices since all but three of the 19 songs are in a foreign language. However, we found Miss Gooding's artistic credo, stated in the liner notes, interesting (although hopelessly silly in relation to performing American folk song): "I believe there is a new way of singing these songs which will use the traditions of classic music, art songs, and country traditions all together." Two peanuts.

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## FOUR NEW BLUESVILLES...

Three grand old troupers and one brilliant younger singer are featured in four new Prestige Bluesville albums.

Lonnie Johnson (LOSING GAME, Prestige Bluesville 1024) is heard in his third Bluesville album, a vast improvement on the first two. He plays unamplified guitar, for a welcome change, and sings a magnificent program of blues, with a few ballads. Johnson is, of course, not a country blues singer, but in his long career in jazz (Armstrong and Ellington) and city blues (a "race record" star for 30 years) he has developed a totally unique and highly enjoyable style. His singing here belies his 60-odd years, and proves that country singers have no monopoly on sincerity in emotional blues. And, for the first time on LP, his fabulous single-string guitar work can be clearly heard and appreciated.

Not quite so well preserved is another man in his 60's, Tampa Red (DON'T TAMPA WITH THE BLUES, Prestige Bluesville 1030). He sings a fine program, including IT'S TIGHT LIKE THAT (the song he made famous in 1927 on one of the first hit records by a male blues singer) as well as KANSAS CITY BLUES, LOUISE, and lesser-known blues. Die-hard blues fans will enjoy hearing him again, and Kenneth Goldstein's efforts for him are commendable, but his performance is too drawn-out, feeble, and lackluster to be

worthwhile to most collectors in this great year for blues.

The younger man (he is 40) is Shakey Jake, on Bluesville (MOUTH HARP BLUES, Prestige Bluesville 1027) for the second time. His first album was completely ruined by the early Bluesville staff, which burdened him with a sugary electric organ and went to great lengths to make Jake respectable. On this album he is presented for what he is, a lowdown singer and harp man in the tradition of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf, etc. His singing is tense and highly emotional, in the best Chicago manner, and the sidemen (electric guitar, piano, bass, drums) all play beautifully and idiomatically. All readers who haunt record shops looking for old Chess and Checker 45's will love this LP.

GOIN' DOWN SLOW (Prestige Bluesville 1028) is a tribute to St. Louis Jimmy, who was a well-known city blues singer for years before a recent auto accident. Since the accident he has taken to writing blues for other singers, and on this disc he sings some of these extraordinary compositions himself. His singing sounds a little clumsy at first, but many listeners, especially those who have been around the blues for a while, will find it very moving.  
(Reviewer: Stella Kay Gibson)

MANCE LIPSCOMB: TROUBLE IN MIND  
(Reprise 2012)

Mance Lipscomb, the Texas guitar-picker

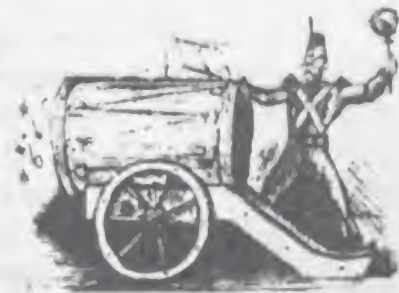
who is one of the great discoveries of the blues renaissance, is heard here on his second LP. This release, on a widely-distributed label, should go far toward getting Mance the renown he deserves. As on his Arhoolie disc, Lipscomb draws (like Leadbelly) from the whole range of old-time Negro music, which includes not only what we call blues but a great many other song forms. Here is a worksong (CAPTAIN, CAPTAIN), spirituals (RUN SINNER RUN and MOTHERLESS CHILDREN, the latter played with knife style guitar), and an instrumental (BUCK DANCE) as well as a wide range of blues ranging from very primitive styles to the comparative sophistication of CARELESS LOVE. Such perennials as ALABAMA BOUND, TROUBLE IN MIND, RED RIVER, and BOLL WEEVIL are included in a selection generally more familiar than the one Mance sings on Arhoolie.

This disc, recorded with the cooperation of Arhoolie's Chris Strachwitz, finds Mance in the same top form as on his first LP. Reprise has wisely restrained from any fancy business. His bag of tricks on the guitar is still overflowing; he is one of the most consummate and versatile traditional guitarists playing today. Because of the familiarity of the selections, people who know Negro music well may find this set less stimulating than the Arhoolie, but those who are just getting acquainted will find the Reprise disc an ideal introduction to an important Negro folk style. Hi-fi fans will

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# University of Chicago Folk Festival Second Annual

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The evening concerts will be held on February 2, 3, 4, 1962, 8:15 P.M., at Mandel Hall (57th and University). Tickets will be sold at \$2.50 for reserved seats, \$2.00 for general admission.

Also, a Children's concert will be held on Saturday, February 3, 1962, 10:30 A.M., at Mandel Hall.

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note that this set is considerably better recorded than the first one. The economy-minded will note that it contains considerably fewer selections than the first did. But don't make a choice -- buy both of them! Incidentally, Reprise has found a good use for the paper sleeve that is packed with LP's to prevent scratching: the lyrics are printed on it. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

RAY CONRAD: THE COTTON-PICKIN' LIFT TOWER AND OTHER SKI SONGS  
(Prestige International 13039)

Certainly the worst of this month's albums is this nauseating little item from Prestige. It is sung by one Ray Conrad, who, we're forced to admit, was once a Minnesotan. Rosalie Sorrels turns up under the name of Druscilla Clang for a chorus or two. The disc is, of all things, a straightforward ski songs album. It has no value as folk music and no value as entertainment. As a matter of fact, it has no value at all. (Reviewer: Martin Goya)

PINK ANDERSON: CAROLINA BLUES MAN  
(Prestige Bluesville 1038) Vol. 1.

It certainly seems natural that sooner or later Prestige should get around to Pink Anderson, who shared a well-remembered (and now reissued) Riverside LP with Blind Gary

Davis some time ago. Sam Charters has done the notes and recording, and Ken Goldstein the production (not vice versa, as stated on the jacket). Charters is an expert at recording blues men, and he gets some fine music out of Anderson.

Anderson's style is characteristic of the Carolinas: it is soft and gentle in comparison to the more violent delivery of singers from farther west. It is quietly emotional rather than tense or orgiastic. All of his numbers could be called "standards": such well-known titles as I HAD MY FUN, THOUSAND WOMAN BLUES, BABY PLEASE DON'T GO, and EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK are included. He plays an unamplified guitar, and his style is similar to Blind Boy Fuller's, although a little bit gentler. This is a fine collection of basic blues.

The real value of this proposed series of recordings is that it will present, in the work of one man, all the myriad of Southern Negro music from blues (as emphasized heavily here in Volume 1) to ballads to minstrel, vaudeville, and popular songs. Anderson's Riverside LP had him singing such varied titles as JOHN HENRY, THE SHIP TITANIC, WRECK OF THE OLD 97, and HE'S IN THE JAILHOUSE NOW. With the documentation of such a diverse treasure-trove, we should wind up with a really valuable anthology of a large body of Negro music, some of it created by professionals, some by the "folk"; all of it part of the oral tradition of the last

fifty years or so. Prestige has presented us with the first album in an admirable series. We shall look forward to future albums with pleasant anticipation. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

LESTER FLATT AND EARL SCRUGGS: SONGS OF THE FAMOUS CARTER FAMILY (Columbia 1664)

Lester and Earl's new album features Mother Maybelle Carter (the guitarist of the original Carter Family of old-timey record fame) playing the autoharp along with the solid support of the Foggy Mountain Boys on 12 of the Carter Family's most famous numbers (KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE, JIMMY BROWN THE NEWSBOY, WORRIED MAN BLUES, etc.). Both Carter Family fans and Flatt and Scruggs enthusiasts should be well pleased with the warm, understanding, and exciting handling of the songs.

Lester does all the vocals on the album (with the exception of a few choruses where the Foggy Mountain Boys vigorously chime in) in his customary high, hard bluegrass style. There is no attempt to imitate the vocal solos of Sara Carter or the Carter Family's ensemble singing on this record. Some of the songs (FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP, ROCK WHERE MOSES STOOD, HOMESTEAD ON THE FARM, WORRIED MAN BLUES) are done in straight and typical Flatt and Scruggs bluegrass style with Earl leading the way with his trusty banjo. On others, notably KEEP ON THE SUNNY SIDE and THE STORMS ARE ON THE OCEAN (my favorite number on the record), some effort is made

to retain the essential Carter Family instrumental "sound" as Earl packs away his banjo in favor of the guitar and joins Maybelle in some spirited guitar-autoharp duets. A bass and Buck Graves' infernal dobro (both should have been left off the album) join Earl and Maybelle to round out the disc's three instrumental numbers; FALSE HEARTED LOVER, PICKIN' IN THE WILDWOOD (the Carter Family called it WILDWOOD FLOWER), and GATHERING FLOWERS FROM THE HILLSIDE.

While this record does not have the marvelous drive and sparkling originality of the original Carter Family, it must certainly be regarded as one of the very best albums of Lester Flatt and Earl Scruggs. Maybelle's autoharp adds considerable "old-timeyness" to the songs and Lester has rarely sung better. The tight unity of the Carter Family has been sacrificed for a more easy and relaxed sound.

Here, once again, we have startling proof that the country musician, instead of being rebuked as being "cornball" and "low-brow" by the folkniks, should be revered as the direct practicing descendant of traditional Southern Mountain folk style. Flatt and Scruggs could teach the coffeehouse beatnik much about the glories of our folklore. This album is enthusiastically recommended to all folk and country music fans.

SUBSCRIBE TO THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW!!!!

## THE FIRST ANNUAL LITTLE SANDY REVIEW ALL-AMERICAN TEAM

- RE PEGGY SEEGER: A young lady with an unusually fine pair of hands.
- RT JOHN GREENWAY: Ornerly and quick to anger, Greenway has been known to tackle just about anybody. A great kicker.
- RG LESTER FLATT: Able and rugged, Lester affords QB Scruggs fine protection.
- C JEAN RITCHIE: A peerless and faultless leader respected by all.
- LG GRANDPA JONES: The team's holler guy.
- LT ED McCURDY: Often called a "dirty" player, big Ed is a regular Rock of Gibraltar in the line.
- LE STRINGBEAN: Has revitalized the whole concept of the football uniform by wearing Uncle Dave's pants.
- QB EARL SCRUGGS: The fastest man on the field.
- HB MIKE SEEGER: A brilliant and inventive runner who closely resembles the great halfbacks of the 1930's.
- HB JACK ELLIOTT: A real triple-threat who can do everything well.
- FB ALAN LOMAX: Easily the most powerful and masterful player in football today, Alan has had some unforgettable days.

Coach of the LSR dream team is wise, crusty old Moses Asch, a real student of the game. Cheerleaders are Joan Baez, Bonnie Dobson, Robin Roberts, Molly Scott, and Hedy West.

(EDITORS' COLUMN, continued from page 2)  
date in February for the release of the additional 12 volumes of his SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES begun on Atlantic ... Jean Ritchie has signed an exclusive Folkways recording contract and will soon have an album out of traditional "hillbilly" songs. Our gal will also appear at the Ash Grove in Los Angeles March 20 through April 8 ... Sandy Paton has formed his own record company, Folk-Legacy Records, and plans to have three or four albums for release in March. Sandy has recorded Horton Barker and Frank Proffitt for Folkways and will be working closely with these same informants as well as with Richard Chase for his own label. Fleming Brown will also be featured on an "interpreters" series. Says Sandy: "This company will devote itself almost entirely to truly traditional artists, we can afford only a handful of records each year but we are determined that every one of them will be an important contribution to the field of recorded folk music." Would that more record companies felt that way! Sandy urges collectors to send him tapes of field singers and promises careful consideration for each tape. For more information on Folk-Legacy, contact Sandy, in care of the company, Huntington, Vermont ... Pete Welding tells us that Doug Quattlebaum (known to blues collectors for some sides he did for Gotham) has been rediscovered in Philadelphia and will do an album for

Prestige Bluesville. Doug is now an ice cream truck driver and uses his guitar-picking and singing to lure prospective customers toward his wares ... Vanguard News: Cisco Houston's LAST SESSIONS carries a tentative March 1962 release date. Look for LP's by the Greenbriar Boys and the Weavers later this month or in early February ... Woody Guthrie fans should get their name on the list for the Woody Guthrie Newsletter pronto. The last one was terrific, with a great article on Woody by Bob Shelton. Lots of news on upcoming books and records, too. Write to The Guthrie Children's Trust Fund, Room 602, 200 W. 57th St., N. Y. 19 ... Local folk music fans will want to catch the weekend sessions at Mattie's Barbecue, 2936 Nicollet Avenue, every Friday night from nine to one. Fun to be had by all ... Last year's University of Chicago Folk Festival may be re-broadcast over the BBC and Radio Moscow, according to Abercrombie K. Jessup, Chicago dulcimer tuner ... Note from Jac Holzman: "Hally Wood's O LOVELY APPEARANCE OF DEATH will be reissued in the Spring of 1962. Future Elektra releases include an album tentatively titled FOLK BANJO STYLES which will feature Eric Weisberg, Tom Paley, Art Rosenbaum, and Marshall Brickman. Elektra 'Bonus Paks' will include Treasure Chests of Spanish song, Negro folk song, and Jewish song -- definitely planned." ... SHOW BUSINESS ILLUSTRATED ran a short article recently on Joan Baez (pronounced "bize") ...

Here are just a few of the people who will appear at this year's University of Chicago Folk Festival February 2, 3, and 4: Rev. Gary Davis, Jack Elliott, Jean and Edna Ritchie, Clarence Ashley and his whole gang, Big Joe Williams, Bill Chipman, the New Lost City Ramblers, and many, many more. See their ad this issue ... Mrs. Jimmie Rodgers, wife of the famous Blue Yodeler, died last month in Texas ... Pete Seeger has a sparkling new edition of his HOW TO PLAY THE 5-STRING BANJO book. Even if you own a copy of the older editions, you'll want the new one for the great new pictures, additional texts, improved bluegrass chapter, etc. Pete's 10" Folkways HOW TO PLAY THE 5-STRING BANJO companion record has also been expanded, to 12" form. No additions have been made to it, however, except in the price tag ... Tickets for the New Lost City Ramblers concert here January 26 are on sale at \$1.75 at the Minnesota Co-op Jr. Bookstore, 612 Washington Ave. S.E., headquarters in this area for folk music records. Friendly Jay Anderson will be glad to show you around, and, while he's at it, sell you a Ramblers album ... The Best News 'til Last Dept.: Folkways will soon release an Uncle Dave Macon LP, edited by Pete Seeger. The University of Minnesota Folklore Society will issue in just a few days an album by Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers. This is a limited edition set and will sell for \$5.00. Mail orders can be addressed to

Lyle Lofgren, University of Minnesota Folklore Society, 3218 4th St. S.E., Mpls. 14 ... At last report, Wedgely Todd was packing them in at a Fairbanks, Alaska, coffeehouse ... In answer to Goya's SPLENDOR IN THE GRASS Folksong Essay Contest, LSR reader Jay Smith, Jacksonville, Florida, has devised his own contest: WRITE AN ILLEGITIMATE CHILDE BALLAD ("All Childe Ballads must be numbered!"). Winner receives absolutely nothing ... No, folks, that's about it for another month. Why not go out and rob an old lady or something so you can send us that \$3.00 and be sure of getting LSR #19 on time. 3220 Park Ave. South, Mpls. 7, is still the address. Do it today.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER  
(\* denotes LP's to be reviewed in LSR)

- \*Jo Stafford: JO STAFFORD SINGS AMERICAN FOLKSONGS (Capitol 1653) Largely a reissue.
- THE JOURNEYMEN (Capitol 1629) Fairly interesting Kingston Trio-type folk group with Dick Weissman on banjo.
- \*THE FOLKLORE OF JOHN LEE HOOKER (VeeJay 1033) Hansen says "Hooker's best."
- \*Roy Acuff: THAT GLORY BOUND TRAIN (Harmony 7294) Columbia's \$1.98 label.
- MEMPHIS SLIM (Chess 1455)
- \*Frank Hamilton: THE FOLKSINGERS' FOLKSINGER (Concert Disc 54)
- \*Walter Forbes: BALLADS AND BLUEGRASS (RCA-Victor 2472)
- \*Josh White: EMPTY BED BLUES (Elektra)

Washington Records, owned by Riverside, has been reissuing many of the old Riverside Folklore Series. Here are some of them: Ed McCurdy, THE BALLAD RECORD (705); Obray Ramsey, BLUE RIDGE BANJO (707); Ritchie and Brand, COURTING SONGS (706); Leon Bibb, SPIRITUALS (701); Sonny Terry (702); Faier, Weissman, and Weisberg, A TREASURY OF 5-STRING BANJO (704); Ewan MacColl, BRITISH ARMY SONGS (711); GOOD OLD MOUNTAIN DEW, formerly BANJO SONGS OF THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS (712).

\*Reno and Smiley: (get this title!) NEW AND ORIGINAL FOLKSONGS WRITTEN IN COMMEMORATION OF THE CENTENNIAL OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR BETWEEN THE STATES (King 756)

\*J. E. Mainer has done some new 45rpm records for King.

\*THE BLUEGRASS GENTLEMEN (Liberty)

\*Obray Ramsey: GATEWAYS TO THE GREAT SMOKIES (Prestige International 13030)

\*Lightnin' Hopkins: BLUES IN THE BOTTLE (Prestige Bluesville 1045)

\*Pete Seeger: GAZETTE, Vol. 2 (Folkways 2502) Not one of Pete's best.

\*Erik Darling: TRUE RELIGION (Vanguard)

\*Greenbriar Boys, Hedy West, David Gude, Jackie Washington: NEW FOLKS (Vanguard). West and the Greenbriars are fine. \$2.98.

\*LUMBERING SONGS FROM THE ONTARIO SHANTIES (Folkways 4052) Field recordings by Edith Fowke. Features O. J. Abbott.

\*The A. L. Phipps Family: MOST REQUESTED SACRED SONGS OF THE CARTER FAMILY (Starday 139) The best country record of the year. An absolute must.

Much more next month, folks.

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

REVEREND GARY DAVIS: A LITTLE MORE FAITH (Prestige Bluesville 1032)

As moving a religious singer as has ever been captured on phonograph record.

OBRAY RAMSEY: FOLK SONGS FROM THE THREE LAURELS (Prestige International 13020)

The unique banjoist-singer is in good form here. RAIN AND SNOW is beautiful.

JESSE FULLER: THE LONE CAT (Good Time Jazz 12039)

Quite probably the most enjoyable performer on records today, Jesse is a history of Negro music all in himself.

THE ORIGINAL AND GREAT CARTER FAMILY (Canadian RCA Camden 586) Available from Co-op Bookstore, 882 Main St., Winnipeg 4, Manitoba, Canada, for \$2.50.

Original and great, a must for every serious folk fan.

THE SONGS AND STORIES OF AUNT MOLLY JACKSON (Folkways 5457) Stories told by Aunt Molly Jackson/Songs sung by John Greenway.

THE phonographic document of Aunt Molly.

INTRODUCING MEMPHIS WILLIE B. (Prestige Bluesville 1034)

Blues in the 1930 country blues idiom.

EWAN MacCOLL: BOTHY BALLADS (Folkways 8759)

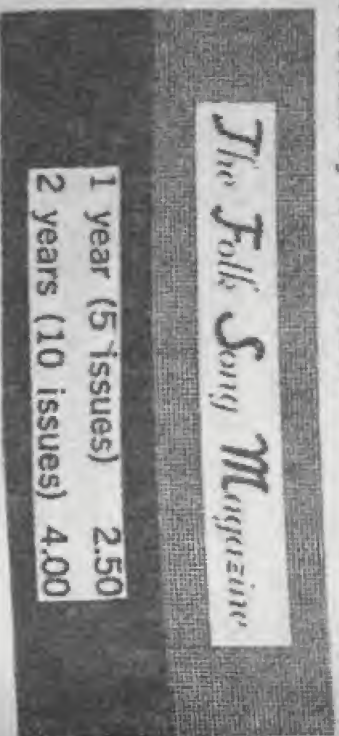
BRITISH INDUSTRIAL BALLADS (Vanguard 9090)

Two great ones by the Scottish master.

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Featured in each issue: Johnny Appleseed, Jr., by Pete Seeger, The Folk Process, The Git-Box, Folk Music On Records, Frets and Frails by Israel Young, etc. Edited by Irwin Silber.



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**THE LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW**



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*TRAVEL BOOK*



On our cover this month is Pete Seeger, "a wonderful musician, tireless worker for folk music, true idealist, and leader -- (he) sings straight and his honesty and charm are winning America." (Quote is from Alan Lomax). Pete can be heard on Folkways, Columbia, Caedmon, Vanguard, Stinson, Topic, and English Folklore Records. Cover drawing is by Barbara Rauhala.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

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*By Paul Nelson & Jon Pankake*

RCA-Victor of England has issued a 3-EP set called KING OF THE BLUES (RCX 202, 203, 204). Volume One features Gus Cannon's Jug Stompers; Volume Two: Big Maceo, Jazz Gillum, Sonny Boy Williamson, Washboard Sam; Volume Three: Big Joe Williams, Arthur Crudup, Sleepy John Estes, Furry Lewis. Price is about \$2.00 per EP. Records may be obtained from Agate (see address page 18) ... Be sure to subscribe now to LSR: 3 bucks yearly at address below. Do it right now.

Readers whose subscriptions run out with this issue will find an "X" marked in the box to the lower right. Three dollars will bring you 12 more shiny issues. LSR, 3220 Park Ave. So., Mpls. 7.

## \* \* \* RECORD REVIEWS \* \* \*

BILLIE PIERCE, SPECKLED RED, DOUG SUGGS,  
JAMES ROBINSON: PRIMITIVE PIANO  
(Folk-Lyric 117)

This is a reissue of an LP released some time ago by Tone Records. "Old-fashioned" is probably a better word than "primitive" for these four city performers. All of them have achieved a solid grasp of old-time city styles.

(Mrs.) Billie Pierce leads off the set with a pair of ragtimey blues and a brisk PANAMA RAG, all of which she does with a lot of verve and a good deal of polish. My guess is that she isn't too happy with being advertised as a PRIMITIVE pianist. Up next are three vigorous, driving performances by Speckled Red, who also displays a sophisticated but very strong city blues style, his Midwestern manner making a good contrast with Mrs. Pierce's Southern approach. Red is in much better form here than on his recent Folkways LP. The reverse side contains work by Doug Suggs, who gives two very appealing samples of the gentler side of boogie-woogie. The final two selections, by James Robinson, are city blues, and are the only ones I would want to call "primitive"; he seems to be very limited, using the same four chords at the end of nearly every line through two very long selections, meanwhile attempting a variety of trills and other blues figurations without making any of them really

come out well.

Traditional piano fans will certainly want to have this album, if they don't have it already, but its general interest is rather limited. It may be obtained for \$4.98 from Folk-Lyric Records, 1945 Bay St., Baton Rouge 2, La.  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

**ROSALIE SORRELS: ROSALIE'S SONGBAG**  
(Prestige International 13025)

Although Rosalie Sorrels' first record, **FOLKSONGS OF IDAHO AND UTAH** (Folkways 5343), preceded **ROSALIE'S SONGBAG** by just a few months, it was recorded considerably earlier than this Prestige release, and the difference in the records is shown here in Mrs. Sorrels' generally improved singing.

Passing over Rosalie's performances of songs learned from books and records (all of little interest), and her tendency to emote on a couple of folknik compositions that resemble title songs for western movies, we find that (to her great credit) her finest singing is of the songs she has collected from old-timers in her home state of Utah. **AWFUL OH HOW AWFUL**, **THE TWO SISTERS**, **THE FEMALE HIGHWAYMAN**, and especially the very beautiful **FOURTH OF JULY** are sung just well enough to hint to us what these songs must have sounded like from the lips of her informants. These performances would seem to indicate that Mrs. Sorrels has access

to some first-rate field singers, and, should she collect with a tape recorder in the future, could yet produce some worthwhile contributions to recorded folklore.

**BROWNIE MCGHEE AND SONNY TERRY: BLUES IN MY SOUL** (Prestige Bluesville 1033)

Here we go again! Ten more performances by the irrepressible duo, this time covering mostly new material. The set opens with **I GOT A WOMAN**, a new composition by Terry and McGhee. It is not bad, though it is doubtful that many will prefer it to the performance of Ray Charles, who also claims to have written the song. The others (except for a new version of **SUN'S GONNA SHINE**) are more or less original. Brownie takes all of the vocals, being joined by Sonny for one song. On Side B, they are joined by Roy Haynes, a modern jazz drummer, who remains off in the background. This disc is certainly an improvement over their last (**BLUES ALL AROUND MY HEAD**, Prestige Bluesville 1020). Brownie's singing is more emotional, and his guitar and Sonny's harp are much more imaginative. In general, it is more personal, less mechanical. In fact, this is not at all a bad disc, although it certainly doesn't compare with the best of this year's blues.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

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3220 Park Ave. South, Minneapolis 7, Minn.

ERIK DARLING: TRUE RELIGION  
(Vanguard 9099)

This disc exemplifies a school of city folk music instrumentation which is related to traditional American musicianship only via a route colored by the influences of jazz, pop music, classical music, the early city folk music interpreters such as Pete Seeger and Josh White, and the musician's own undisciplined improvisations and inventions. The deviousness of this approach is clearly reflected in the disunity and vagueness of the resulting music. Such hazardous influences, detrimental to the city musician's potential to produce a clear, unified, communicative, and artistic form of music, can be overcome only through applied and serious study of the handful of available recordings of traditional musicians. Few city musicians have the talent and dedication required for such study. Most seem content to drift with the tide of the mass communications media, haphazardly tooling the sounds thrust at them into a form of near-music which could conceivably be the basis of a completely new form of true city folk music, but which has only a nodding acquaintance with the 300 years of American traditional rural music -- an acquaintance which becomes less and less year by year.

Erik Darling is certainly the foremost product of this school of musical thought,

for the cleanness, complexity, and taste of his musicianship is unmatched by any other folknik. This album is an excellent demonstration of his facility. The fact that his instrumentals seldom rise above being jazzy caricatures of the playing of the traditional masters is another matter.

Darling's recent years of singing with the Tarrriers and the Weavers have considerably strengthened his singing voice (compare the singing here with that on ERIK DARLING, Elektra 154), but it is still a very meager voice -- as is most painfully apparent on his singing of Negro songs. Darling's JUMPIN' JUDY must rank as one of the feeblest unaccompanied vocal performances to be found on modern LP's.

Manny Solomon's liner notes interestingly defy any logical interpretation. After frowning upon "wide ranging eclectics who indiscriminately sing songs from many American folk traditions without concern for style, meaning, or traditional performance characteristics" (as good a description of Darling as one could ask for), he characterizes Darling as "an eclectic specialist," having "the hallmarks of a cultist (sic) in almost every folksong area he approaches." Solomon's implication that city singers whose "emphasis on stylistic accuracy" is "at the expense of meaningful content" and his conclusion "that no single area of American folksong can by itself provide a sufficiently broad emotional or intellectual spectrum" should raise a number of folkloristic eyebrows.

Regardless of our opinion of this disc, we predict that it will be a popular sales success and will contribute greatly to the death of traditional banjo and guitar playing.

**BARRELHOUSE BUCK: BACK COUNTRY BARRELHOUSE**  
(Folkways 3554)

Here is robust, virile piano playing by an old pro from St. Louis, rediscovered after years of obscurity and brought to the world by Folkways and Sam Charters. The program of little-known but appealing material includes many slow blues, several numbers in something approaching boogie-woogie style, and one spiritual, plus some spoken reminiscences by the pianist. Buck sings lustily, and plays with real gusto on an instrument whose tone is itself an ethnic document. The recording, made on location in Alton, Illinois, is marred by excessive wow and flutter (Somebody hoodooed your Ampex, Sam!) but it still sounds great in its proper atmosphere, turned up loud in a noisy room, and no real piano fan will want to miss it. Charters' notes are all one could ask for, and another installment in the Folkways Panorama of American Folk Architecture graces the cover. Recommended. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

Upcoming soon in LSR: Our big Country Music issue, complete coverage of the second Chicago Folk Festival, a British record issue, an index of LSR's #1-24.

**SONNY TERRY'S NEW SOUND: THE JAWHARP IN**  
**BLUES AND FOLK MUSIC (Folkways 3821)**

Sonny Terry, who picked up the lowly and limited non-chromatic harmonica and made a virtuoso instrument of it, here picks up the even lower and more limited jawharp and at least gives it a good try. Accompanied by Brownie McGhee on guitar and J.C. Burris on bones or harmonica, Sonny doynge-a-doyngs his way through a program ranging from slow blues to FOX CHASE and SHORTNIN' BREAD. It must be admitted that Sonny (even when he seems to be having the time of his life) is unable to repeat on this instrument his miracle of the harmonica. Despite the assertions of Charles Edward Smith's most scholarly notes, he is not really capable of getting a tune out of the thing. (SKIP TO MY LOU and SHORTNIN' BREAD would, but for the guitar accompaniment, be indistinguishable from each other). Although there are some interesting rhythmic effects, the "new sound" palls very quickly, and we are relieved indeed to find that Sonny takes up the good old mouth-harp for several tracks, including a couple of very fine instrumental blues. J.C. Burris helps out with the bones, and even more so with his harmonica, on which he takes a back seat only to Sonny (with whom he plays two duets). Brownie McGhee accompanies very capably and sensitively throughout, though the line "Did you ever hear the blues on a battered old guitar" on BLUES FROM EVERY-

WHERE represents the nadir of his singing career. Though not absolutely essential to the modest record library, the album is fun to hear, at least in small segments. A complete hearing rather makes one miss the good old 10" LP.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JIMMY SHAND: STEP WE GAILY (Mercury 203)

As the "Scottish Country Dance Music" subtitle implies, this record offers an instrumental selection of reels, strathspeys, jigs, and waltzes for Scottish country dancing. Indeed, it would be difficult to sit still while listening to this lighthearted, lilting music. Jimmy Shand is certainly the leading exponent of this type of music and his name has been known for over fifteen years in any place in the world where Scots gather to do their country dances -- the quadrille, the eightsome reel, schottish, the Gay Gordons, Dashing White Sergeant, Road to the Isles, waltze, etc.

The traditional Scottish dance band consists of a button accordion (in this case played by Jimmy Shand), a fiddle, piano, and drums. In former times, the fiddle was the lead instrument, but in recent years, the button accordion or melodion has taken over. The older style with the lead fiddle can be heard on some of Jean Carignan's recordings.

Although I am no authority on country

dance music, I have become aware in recent years that the basic combination of instruments for country dance music in the British-American tradition (including the Scots and the Irish) is the fiddle and PIANO, to which is often added an accordion, hammered dulcimer, drums, flute, etc. I call attention to this because one often finds among folk music enthusiasts in the cities a prejudice against pianos, accordions, and other legitimate instruments in connection with folk music. The fact is that traditional folk music has been -- and still is -- being played throughout the world on almost every conceivable instrument by traditional folk musicians. Although the guitar and banjo are very much the vogue in the folk music revival, the role of these instruments in traditional American and British folk music has been very much exaggerated. I would venture to say that such instruments as the fiddle, piano, harmonica, and hammered and plucked dulcimer as well as the concertina and accordion have also played a prominent role as accompaniment for songs as well as dancing. (Editors' Note: It is interesting to note that the great Virginia folk artist, Hobart Smith, plays SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN on the piano on FOLK MUSIC U.S.A., Folkways 4530).

Anyone who wishes to hear the music to which Scottish people do their country dances the world over, listen to this record by Jimmy Shand with his button accordion and band of fiddle, piano, and drums. (Guest Reviewer: George Armstrong)

ELLA JENKINS: THIS IS RHYTHM  
(Folkways 7652)

Miss Jenkins, who is responsible for the most objectionable record in the whole Folkways catalog (NEGRO FOLK RHYTHMS, 2374), here tackles a less ambitious project and comes through pretty well. This record is designed for children in the primary grades, and the notes indicate that blind children were especially considered in the preparation. The first side, continuing over to Band 1 on the second, is a simple demonstration of a great variety of the world's rhythm instruments, each accompanied by a little rhyme (Sample: I am the Congo drum/ Tap my head -- I'm lots of fun) and a little explanation of its significance, spoken by Miss Jenkins in a perfect teacher voice. The remainder of Side 2 is a tasteful program of little children's songs (LITTLE RED CABOOSE, O WHERE HAS MY LITTLE DOG GONE, MY DOG HAS FLEAS, etc.) pleasantly sung by Miss Jenkins. I am no educational expert, but it all sounds quite good to me.

Nowhere, except in a photograph in the booklet, is there any indication that Miss Jenkins is a Negro. Relieved of the racial emphasis which she handled so badly on her earlier release, she does quite well. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

Join the University of Minnesota Folksong Society. For details, write to Lyle Lofgren, 3218 4th St. S.E., Minneapolis 14.

JUDY COLLINS: A MAID OF CONSTANT SORROW  
(Elektra 209)

Here then is Elektra's belated entry in the urban folk music revival's burgeoning Petticoat Brigade. Jac Holzman and company have probably selected themselves a seller, for Miss Collins, a dead ringer for film star Joanne Woodward, is fully as fetching as any of her competition -- and her good looks, strong alto voice, and easy stage manner should attract a goodly following for both her albums and her personal appearances. One senses a shrewd production mind behind this entire LP: the record jacket is eye-catching, the disc contains a solid line-up of the moony and overly dramatic folknik ballads and love songs that are currently popular in coffeehouse circles, and the old reliables Erik Darling and Fred Hellerman have been obtained to accompany Miss Collins.

As for Miss Collins herself, nowhere in her album is there any evidence that she knows anything about folk music or folksinging, or that she regards her music as anything better than entertainment for drunks and impressionable adolescents. Her repertoire (WILD MOUNTAIN THYME, JOHN RILEY, PRETTY SARO, etc.) reflects nothing more than the LP's she has listened to. Nonetheless, this disc will surely keep Elektra's coffers clinking until the next folk music fad makes Miss Collins and her kind obsolete. LSR readers are advised to keep

their purses buttoned, for better days are coming.

BLUES FELL THIS MORNING (Philips BBL 7369)  
A British LP.

From the vaults of American Columbia, by way of its European affiliate, comes a priceless blues anthology, containing 14 superb Southern blues performances recorded between 1927 and 1940, expertly dubbed from clean copies (possibly the masters). Bukka White, Blind Boy Fuller, and many lesser known performers are included.

This album is unique among blues anthologies in having been compiled with special attention to the quality of the lyrics. It is part of a vast labor of love by the British scholar, Paul Oliver, aimed at relating "the growth of the blues to the history of the Negro in America" and explaining the music's meaning and significance. A book, soon to be published in the United States (and reviewed in these pages), is the central part of the project.

This recorded anthology does not claim to be musically comprehensive; Oliver has not gone out of his way to include "big names" or to include a great diversity of styles. He has just included 14 of the most expressive and significant blues performances he could find, and he has chosen very well. Every track is a gem, and despite the emphasis on lyrics, the

true devotee of blues singing and guitar playing will find plenty of excitement here.

The selection of lyrics is very typical. Sex is, as always, the matter of first importance; it is the major subject of many of the songs, and those which start out on other subjects frequently wander back to it. (Bob Campbell's STARVATION FARM BLUES dismisses the Depression in two verses, moving quickly into rich sexual imagery). Many other subjects appear, however. Bukka White sings a deeply felt lament over his mother's grave; Barefoot Bill sings a prison blues of abject repentance and urgent warning; and Peg Leg Howell (in a remarkable song composed of three separate strains) eulogizes a "skin game". Blind Boy Fuller sings to soldiers going off to war (and reminds them, of course, of his designs on their women!). Then there is Barbecue Bob, whose song will startle some listeners: it bluntly and high-spiritedly asserts the superiority of brown-skinned Negroes to those of lighter or darker shades, for whom the singer expresses the utmost contempt.

The set abounds with musical delights. Lewis Black, the most primitive singer represented, opens the set with a "holler"-like piece in which he is unsure of the words but never of the guitar accompaniment: a rich, colorful evocation of a locomotive. Bob Campbell's STARVATION FARM BLUES gives us an idea of the complexity a great primitive performer can achieve; his

harmonies are adventurous indeed, and the highly complex, precisely controlled (yet ever so natural) syncopation of both voice and guitar show him to be a real master of the vital art of timing. David Crockett proves himself an equally formidable guitarist in a more conventional framework, accompanying "Stovepipe No. 1", who gives us a chorus or two on that formidable instrument. Lonnie Johnson, accompanying Texas Alexander, does all kinds of single-string tricks. Josh White is supposed to have invented fifteen years later. "Tallahassee Tight" gives us the lowdown on his home town in a wonderfully relaxed conversational blues, with guitar runs anticipating those of Blind Boy Fuller. Texas Bill Day gives us, for contrast, a good example of early "city" style, still emotional but more formalized in a "square" 12-bar pattern, with less complex variations than are found in country blues. The fabulous husband-wife guitar team of Kansas Joe and Memphis Minnie make their first LP appearance in a furious uptempo blues, WHEN THE LEVEE BREAKS, their picking mirroring the urgency of the situation described.

The last two tracks on the LP graphically represent two very different attitudes toward the blues. Henry Williams and Eddie Anthony (the latter a great old-time fiddler) give us the "Good Time Blues"; they sing lustily, with rollicking humor and not without a bit of healthy sentimentality. Their whole idea is to

cheer themselves and their listeners up, and their music has an escapist quality to it despite its earthiness. Otis Harris, on the other hand, directly expresses his intense suffering in his singing. In stark contrast to the carefree manner of Williams and Anthony, he sings in short, stabbing phrases, their cryptic poetry enhanced by the many long (but very carefully timed) pauses in which we hear only the highly unique guitar accompaniment. Skillful and complex, but unchanged and somewhat detached throughout the piece (until the unbelievable final chord), the guitar sets off the voice in an unparalleled manner. This performance, from the only known recording by a totally unknown singer, is a stunning example of the artistic level (in the full sense of that word) that a traditional performer can achieve.

The recordings (especially those made by Columbia itself) are clear and lifelike, and no one should have any cause to complain of the reproduction on this disc. Oliver has done a fine job of editing; the notes are extremely readable. They give essential information about each record, and tie it in with Negro life as best they can. They are of necessity oversimplified, and sometimes treat Negroes a bit clinically, but few will quarrel with the results. Oliver's literacy is a great relief from the general run of liner notes.

This record is not an easy one to listen to, but in terms of the rewards it offers



to the serious listener, it is very likely the greatest of all the blues anthologies. It is well worth the somewhat bothersome international ordering procedure to obtain. The price is 35/9½, about \$5.25. The disc may be purchased from Agate & Company, Ltd., 10 Rathbone Place, Oxford Street, London W. 1. England.  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

**GID TANNER AND HIS SKILLET LICKERS**  
(Folksong Society of Minnesota 15001-D)

Gid Tanner and his Skillet Lickers is a name for the ages as far as old-time string-band and folk music enthusiasts are concerned. The most popular and widely recorded band of the 1920's and '30's, the Skillet Lickers were also, in many ways, the very finest. Certainly their wild Georgia brand of music with its screaming double and triple fiddles and unusually large repertoire, running the gamut from rough backwoods dance tunes and ballads to vaudeville, minstrel show, ragtime, Gay 90's numbers, and outlandishly humorous medicine show-type skits, were major factors in shaping modern American country music at both the amateur and professional levels.

Here, for the first time on any modern recording, is an opportunity to hear again this fabulous band as it sounded in the glory days of uncommercialized professional

(continued on page 23)

Origin Jazz Library's HENRY "Ragtime" THOMAS SINGS THE TEXAS BLUES! (OJL-3) is a smasher! All my friends and I have it! Send \$5 to Origin Jazz Library, 39 Remsen St. (1E), Brooklyn Heights 1, N. Y. Strongly recommended by LSR.



# GID TANNER



GID TANNER

NANCY ROLLIN  
 IF YOU WANT TO GO A-COURTING  
 MOLLY PUT THE KETTLE ON  
 DON'T YOU HEAR JERUSALEM MOAN  
 HAND ME DOWN MY WALKING CANE  
 S-A-V-E-D  
 MISS McLEOD'S REEL  
 LIBERTY  
 YOU GOT TO STOP DRINKING SHINE  
 SAL LET ME CHAW YOUR ROSIN SOME  
 GOODBYE BOOZE  
 GEORGIA RAILROAD  
 A BEE HUNT ON HELL-FOR-SARTIN CREEK

NEW ELECTRICAL PROCESS

FSSMLP 15001-D

## AND HIS SKILLET LICKERS

RLEY PUCKETT - CLAYTON MCMICHEN  
 FATE NORRIS - LOWE STOKES



#4.95 From : THE FOLKSONG SOCIETY OF MINNEAPOLIS, 3218 4th STREET S.E., MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA



## New folk

MR. FRANK HAMILTON, founder of The Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, Illinois, and folk instrumentalist superb, has recorded his first record album for us. It is Concert-Disc M-1054: THE FOLK SINGERS' FOLK SINGER. Get it at your local record store now.

(continued from page 18)

country music. Heard to especially good effect are the three most interesting members of the band: Gid Tanner himself, a remarkable talent, whose fiddling and singing show a peculiar similarity in sound -- wild, ragged, and strong; Clayton McMichen, the band's spokesman, a voice dripping with personality and wit, and a fiddler of extraordinary range and ability; and Riley Puckett, whose trumpeting lead singing is an instantly recognizable characteristic of the band, and whose amazingly complex and original guitar backing was the finest of its type recorded in the first half of this century.

The thirteen selections, all remastered from the original 78rpm discs, give an accurate picture of the Lickers and their music. Included are not only samples of the full band in roaring form (DON'T YOU HEAR JERUSALEM MOAN exemplifies the Skillet Lickers' unique multiple fiddle effect; HAND ME DOWN MY WALKING CANE their powerful vocal and instrumental humor), but also two solos by Gid with banjo, two duets with Gid on fiddle and Fate Norris on guitar demonstrating Tanner's humorous falsetto singing, a rare early acoustic side of Gid on fiddle and Riley on banjo doing GEORGIA RAILROAD (one of the finest of all old-timey recordings), and an example of one of the Skillet Lickers' crazy skits, BEE HUNT ON HELL FOR SARTIN CREEK, with the Lickers hilariously bungling up a job of cutting

down a bee tree and sawing out a few "choons" in the process.

The Folksong Society of Minnesota has done a good job of production: the sides have been mastered from clean copies of the original records, and the fidelity is as good as one could expect on an album of this nature. The enclosed booklet of notes, containing the texts of the songs, is not as informative as the serious listener would want, but this is a minor point -- the music of the Skillet Lickers speaks eloquently and excitingly for itself. The FSSM reportedly plans other albums of reissues of this sort (depending on public acceptance of this record), so let's all dig deep and put out our record money for an album on which we get our every penny's worth back in satisfaction (a rare enough thing on today's folk music record scene). GID TANNER AND HIS SKILLET LICKERS is a good job well done, and, more importantly, a much needed and most welcome documentation of the old-time string-band at its finest.

This album is available only by mail from the Folksong Society of Minnesota, (Attention: Earle Kranz), 3218 4th St. S.E., Minneapolis, Minnesota. \$4.95 post-paid.

THE FOLKLORE OF JOHN LEE HOOKER  
(Vee-Jay 1033)

John Lee Hooker is now an established

trouper on the Paul Endicott college and coffeehouse circuit, along with Pete Seeger, Terry and McGhee, Guy Carawan, Bonnie Dobson, and so on. The title and arty jacket of this album are obvious appeals to his new audiences, and one might almost expect to hear Hooker come out with JOHN HENRY, MIDNIGHT SPECIAL, or FREIGHT TRAIN. Happily, nothing of the kind! After an opening TUPELO, cut at the 1960 Newport Folk Festival, Hooker swings right back into his fabulous R&B groove, with the intense, spontaneous singing and magnificent electric guitar playing which have always been his stock in trade. Four of the tracks are with a combo featuring three electric guitars, one played by the notable Jimmy Reed. This unit develops a cohesive swing that outclasses all competition in modern R&B. There is another cut from the Folk Festival, a thrilling autobiographical blues called THE HOBO. On the rest of the numbers, Hooker works alone with his electric guitar. He gets along much better with this instrument than he does with the acoustic guitar he uses on Riverside; it is not only powerful but evocative, subtle and beautiful, especially on the slow blues.

Throughout the album, it is obvious that Hooker's singing has progressed a great deal in the last couple of years, rather than regressed as does that of most blues men who hit the college trail. He is no longer monotonous like he used to be.

He shows much greater understanding of the individual songs and their meaning than he has ever shown before, and he has, if anything, increased in his unmatched primitive intensity. Previous Hooker albums were uneven, and best appreciated in small doses, but this one can be played all the way through with undiminished enjoyment; only one cut, a ballad, falls below the general high level.

This album will captivate any blues fan, whether his sympathies lie with Blind Lemon or with Bo Diddley. It also serves as an excellent introduction to modern "Chicago" blues style. It stands as John Lee's greatest LP, and re-establishes him at the very top of the blues world. (Reviewer: Miss I. Frost)

LUCY STEWART: TRADITIONAL SINGER FROM ABERDEENSHIRE, SCOTLAND, Volume One, CHILD BALLADS (Folkways 3519)

Writing of his year-long sojourn in Scotland, American folklorist Kenneth S. Goldstein states, "My project was to make a study of the folklore of a Scottish family in the context in which such folklore existed." Having located a truly amazing family, the Stewarts of Fetterangus, Goldstein obtained a magnificent collection, "indeed, the full gamut of folklore traditions existed in this one marvelous family." This album is the first in a series of eight that Mr.

Goldstein is preparing, all dealing with the Stewarts. While later albums will contain tales, games, and the singing of the remarkably talented Stewart teenagers, the first three will study the "major tradition bearer" of the family, Lucy Stewart.

"Aunt Lucy", 59 years old at the time of this recording, is a poignant figure of a woman. According to Goldstein's biographical information, life seems rather to have passed by Lucy Stewart. As a young girl, her duties were caring for the younger children of her own parents and of other relatives. She never left home and never married. However closed her life has been, she has absorbed an enormous amount of tradition from her parents and relatives. To this she brings a rich personality and musical talent of her own; her voice is sweet and strong, and it is a moving experience for us to be able to hear her in her own cottage, quietly pondering the hoofbeat and drumroll of Scottish history in THE BATTLE OF HARLAW, or musing sympathetically over the tragedy of THE TWO BROTHERS. The completeness of the nine ballads she sings on this record is an indication of the richness of the Stewart family tradition, and an exciting promise of what we can expect from the rest of the series of Stewart albums. Like fine wine, this record is for those able to appreciate it. Those who can bring to it the gift of understanding will find it a must for their collection.

MEMPHIS SLIM: CHICAGO BLUES  
(Folkways 3536)

This makes about 10 LP's for Memphis Slim, probably the most commercially successful of the blues old-timers who have been introduced to LP audiences in the last three years. This set, unlike some of its predecessors, is a howling success musically as well. Slim is in great form as he roars through four boogies, two city blues (one of which is ALBERTA), and two topical monologues backed up by blues piano. These last will appeal strongly to those who follow today's events in the South, passively and actively. One is an allegorical commentary on the 1960 elections, and the other, DOWN SOUTH, is a frank and humorous commentary on the general situation of today's Negroes. It takes in lunch counters, rock & roll, bus stations, the reaction of a Northern Negro to his first trip South, and so on. Less spectacular, more deeply emotional than the arrogance of Josh White or the histrionics of the young Negro college singers, I suspect that it is a far better representation of the feelings of Negroes in general. Social questions aside, this album will be a great delight to boogie-woogie fans as well. Slim is the equal of any active boogie pianist, and he has a fluent command of the contributions of his predecessors to the art (beautifully exhibited on one number

especially composed for that purpose) as well as a robust and brilliant style of his own. At 46, he is still in his prime, and has not been reduced to a museum piece by his European travels. (Compare the recent Folkways album by Speckled Red). Arbee Stidham (guitar) and Jump Jackson (drums) join in to give the set the flavor of a lively, informal session, though the record is all Slim's. Martin Williams has written excellent notes to contribute to the altogether superb production. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

THE GARDNERS: INTERNATIONAL FOLKSONG  
ARTISTS (Prestige International 13032)

Although there are folk songs on this album, its contents cannot be considered folk music of any sort. Peter and Isabel Gardner are accomplished, prize-winning classical musicians and singers. Why they are squandering their training and talent on a musical form that is so unfit for them is not at all clear. For whom is this album intended? Those who enjoy listening to classical music will find the Gardners' vocal and instrumental (classic guitar and flute) abilities completely unchallenged by the simplicity and basicness of the music. Those who enjoy folk music will not be able to penetrate the stylistic facade that the Gardners throw up around the songs. Having little patience with such pointlessness, and even less politeness, we find the Gardners absurd and distasteful.

JOSH WHITE AT TOWN HALL (Mercury 20672)

BUD DASHIELL & THE KINSMEN

(Warner Bros. 1429)

BUD DASHIELL & THE KINSMEN SING EVERYBODY'S  
HITS (Warner Bros. 1432)

JO STAFFORD SINGS AMERICAN FOLKSONGS  
(Capitol 1653)

CHARLES TRENT: THE SOUND OF A BLUEGRASS  
BANJO (Smash 27002)

RAY BOGUSLAV: CURFEW SHALL NOT RING  
TONIGHT! (Monitor 359)

ROBERT H. BEERS: THE ART OF THE PSALTERY  
(Prestige International 13028)

Josh White, that redoubtable folknik favorite who is the blues to every folk fan under 15, brings, like the boll weevil, "his whole damn family" to this September, 1961, Town Hall concert. Son Josh, Jr., whose talent you could put in a peanut shell and still have enough room left over for most of Manhattan Island, brays away loudly at Woody Guthrie's PASTURES OF PLENTY in one of the most sickening performances on LP. Daughter Bev, the best thing on this record, sings HALF AS MUCH in a pleasant pop music manner. Josh himself doodles away on his familiar songbag of favorites. He may well be the only folksinger in America who hasn't learned a new song in the past decade.

In regard to Bud Dashiell (the Bud of Bud and Travis) & the Kinsmen, the subtitle of one of their albums ought to be enough to scare away most LSR readers: "Folk Music in a Contemporary Manner,"

EVERYBODY'S HITS finds the boys doing such folkum favorites as GREENFIELDS, SCARLET RIBBONS, JAMAICA FAREWELL, and others just like whatever horrendous group did them in the first place. Sort of an anthology of trash. #1429 is mostly Spanish-flavored pop music and "humor". Both albums are worthless.

Jo Stafford's AMERICAN FOLKSONGS in its original 78rpm and later 10" form prompted the following comment from Alan Lomax: "(Miss Stafford is) a pop singer with a warm feeling for folksong." Here now, in a 12" reissue, are the original eight songs (BARBARA ALLEN, SHENANDOAH, RED ROSEY BUSH, WAYFARING STRANGER, etc., all with Paul Weston's orchestra) plus four new ones (JOE CLARK, SINGLE GIRL, CRIPPLE CREEK, SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN) backed by Joe Maphis' string-band. Miss Stafford is a pleasant, heady singer, not at all hard to listen to, and those with an extremely broad range of interest in folk music and folk music performance may enjoy this LP. To most of us though, I'm afraid it's way too far outside the folk idiom.

THE SOUND OF A BLUEGRASS BANJO features Charlie Trent, the banjoist for the Carlises, playing such songs as CRIPPLE CREEK, JOE CLARK, MAGGIE, WILDWOOD FLOWER, and JOHN HENRY. The only trouble is that he plays them on electric 5-string banjo. The piano, guitar, and drums backing don't help much either.

Ray Boguslav, one of Belafonte's old guitarists, takes the popular concert singer's route (and repertoire) here for this "live" recording for Monitor. Anyone interested (it says here) will hear such dandies as DELIA'S GONE and OLD BLUE performed on the nylon-string guitar by a real "virtuoso". The album's title number is a satirical reading a la Ed McCurdy.

Bob Beers' ART OF THE PSALTERY is really not a folk LP at all, but rather a sort of psaltery appreciation record. It's quite beautiful for what it is, and classical fans may be quite taken with it. The average folk fan will find nothing that will interest him.

#### LAST MINUTE RECORD NEWS

Folkways will have an OLD-TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S, Volume Two (featuring Doc Watson) and a CLARENCE GREENE album out soon..Riverside Records has reissued (via Washington Records) the entire nine volumes of THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS (THE CHILD BALLADS) by MacColl and Lloyd. New numbers: Washington 715-723..Also reissued on Washington: MacColl and Lloyd's WHALING SONGS (724) and Merrick Jarrett's SONGS OF THE OLD WEST (725)..New Grandpa Jones on Monument..New Kingston Trio on Capitol..JOSH WHITE LIVE! (ABC-Paramount 407)..New Merle Travis on Capitol..Film star Maureen O'Hara sings Irish folksongs on Columbia.

#### ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER (\*denotes LP's to be reviewed in LSR)

LEON BIBB SINGS (Columbia 1762) The Belafonte bit, complete with Bob DeCormier.  
INMAN AND IRA (Columbia 1731) The world's worst folk group, bar none.

\*ODETTA AT TOWN HALL (Vanguard 9103)

\*THE GREENBRIAR BOYS (Vanguard 9104)

Good group. Recommended.

\*Clara Ward and her Singers: COME IN THE ROOM (Vanguard 9101)

Burl Ives: SONGS OF THE WEST (Decca 4179)

Ivy League Trio: ON AND OFF CAMPUS (Coral 57399) Junk.

Capitol Records have signed Barbara Dane.  
BUD AND TRAVIS IN CONCERT, Volume Two (Liberty) More junk.

The Highwaymen: STANDING ROOM ONLY (United Artists 3168) This group uses better material than most folkum groups.

THE MANY VOICES OF MARIAM MAKEBA (Kapp)  
A Belafonte production.

Chad Mitchell Trio: MIGHTY DAY ON CAMPUS (Kapp) Not very mighty.

Tokens: LION SLEEPS TONIGHT (RCA-Victor)  
Top Forty stuff.

Ed McCurdy: BEST OF DALLIANCE (Elektra 213) A 2-for-\$4.98 anthology of all the Dalliance volumes on Elektra.

Theodore Bikel: A HARVEST OF ISRAELI (Elektra 210)

Martha Schlamme: IN CONCERT (M-G-M 3978)  
Many languages.

Oscar Brand: DRINKING MAN'S SONGBOOK (Offbeat 4021) Reissue of Riverside 12-630.



\*Ronnie Gilbert will do Elektra's Bonus Pak TREASURY OF NEGRO FOLK MUSIC.

TRAVELING GUITARS (Request 10037) Jazz treatment to songs of many lands.

SING OUT WITH THE LIMELITERS (RCA-Victor 2445)

CONNIE FRANCIS SINGS FOLKSONG FAVORITES (M-G-M 3969) Pop singer.

SOUND OF FOLK MUSIC (Vanguard 125)

A sampler of Vanguard folk artists. \$1.98.

\*THE FOLKSINGERS OF WASHINGTON SQUARE (Continental 2010) Logan English, Molly Scott, Benjy Bull, etc.

Justin Wilson: I GAWR-ON-TEE (Project) Cajun humor.

Jack Dupree: CHAMPION OF THE BLUES (Atlantic 8056)

Joan Baez has a 45rpm of BANKS OF THE OHIO and OLD BLUE on Vanguard.

U.S. Coast Guard Academy Singers: SONGS OF ACTION (M-G-M 3948) For war mongers.

Riverside Records will add a gospel label to their rostrum soon. Battle Records will feature Reverend C. L. Franklin (formerly on Chess).

HIGH AND DRY WITH THE YACHTMEN (Vista)  
THE BUSKERS (RCA-Victor International)  
Pop music.

Art and Paul: HANGIN', DRINKIN', AND STUFF (Columbia) Feeble.

Oscar Brand: FOR DOCTORS ONLY (Elektra)  
Shantymen: A TREASURY OF SPICY SEA SONGS (Bethlehem 6057)

Shenandoah Trio have an album on Dot.  
Salli Terri: I KNOW MY LOVE (Capitol)

\*Sandy Paton has some sort of a record on the Droll label.

\*Continental Records has a Richard Dyer-Bennet album. The same company also has LP's featuring Reverend Gary Davis (recordings from 1949), Jack Dupree, and Brownie McGhee.

\*WOODY GUTHRIE SINGS FOLK SONGS (Folkways 2483) Mostly brand new songs.

\*BIG BILL BROONZY SINGS FOLK SONGS (Folkways 2328)

\*FRANK PROFITT (Folkways 2360) Traditional singer recorded by Sandy Paton.

\*HORTON BARKER (Folkways 2362) Traditional singer recorded by Sandy Paton.

\*MEMPHIS SLIM AND WILLIE DIXON AT THE VILLAGE GATE (Folkways 2386)

\*Jean Ritchie: PRECIOUS MEMORIES (Folkways 2427) Jean sings this program of hillbilly songs beautifully, but the citized backing of Eric Weissberg, Marshall Brickman, and Art Rosenbaum is a complete disaster.

\*LEADBELLY SINGS FOLK SONGS (Folkways 2488) Great record.

\*Fred Gerlach: TWELVE-STRING GUITAR (Folkways 3529) Looks like Gerlach's old Audio-Video LP. Same songs.

\*THE ELLIOTS OF BIRTLEY (Folkways 3565) A musical portrait of a Durham mining family, compiled and edited from material collected by Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger.

\*Dave Fredrickson: SONGS OF THE WEST (Folkways 5259)

\*Tex-I-An Boys: SONGS OF TEXAS  
(Folkways 5328) John A. Lomax, Jr.,  
Pete Rose, Ed Badeaux, Jim McConnell,  
and Howard Porper sing a spirited album  
of Texas songs.

\*OLD TIME COUPLE DANCES (Folkways 8827)  
Canadian dance record recorded by Edith  
Fowke.

\*PETE SEEGER AT THE VILLAGE GATE, Volume  
Two (Folkways 2451) Far better than the  
first.

\*FRANK HAMILTON SINGS FOLK SONGS  
(Folkways 2437)

\*Ewan MacColl: BROADSIDE BALLADS  
(LONDON: 1600-1700) (Folkways 3043)

\*MARITIME FOLK SONGS (Folkways 4307)  
From the collection of Helen Creighton.

\*Ray Boguslav: CURFEW SHALL NOT RING  
TONIGHT (Monitor 359)

\*Dick Cameron: IRISH FOLK SONGS AND  
BALLADS (Folkways 3516)

\*Harvesters: PASTURES OF PLENTY  
(Folkways 2406)

\*Charles Trent: THE SOUND OF A BLUEGRASS  
BANJO (Smash 27002) Electric (!) Blue-  
grass.

\*JOSH WHITE AT TOWN HALL (Mercury 20672)

\*BUD DASHIELL & THE KINSMEN SING EVERY-  
BODY'S HITS (Warner Bros. 1432) Anthology  
of folkum.

Lightnin' Chance: WON'T THAT BLOW YOUR  
HAT IN THE CREEK (Warner Bros. 1444)  
WSM Grand Ole Opry humor.

\*THE WEAVERS' ALMANAC (Vanguard 9100)

\*SCOTTISH BAGPIPE TUNES (Folkways 3550)  
Played by Pipe Major James MacColl.

\*THE BALLADS OF JOHN JACOB NILES  
(Tradition 1046) Ridiculous. 2-LP set.

\*Robin Hall and Jimmie MacGregor: TWO  
HEIDS ARE BETTER THAN YIN (Monitor 365)  
Songs of Scotland and England.

\*BILLY EDD AND BLUEGRASS, TOO  
(Monitor 367) Three-fourths of this LP  
features Billy Edd Wheeler, a worthless  
performer; the other one-fourth has songs  
by two of the Coon Creek Girls and some  
banjo pieces by traditional artists  
around Berea, Kentucky. A curious disc.

\*The Barrier Brothers: GOLDEN BLUEGRASS  
HITS (Philips 200-003)

\*HENRY THOMAS SINGS THE TEXAS BLUES!  
(Origin Jazz Library 3) An absolute must.  
"The first reissue of 14 blues and ballads  
in the very early country manner as re-  
corded in 1927, 1928 by the last great  
master of this style...LIMITED EDITION."  
Available for \$5.00 from Origin Jazz  
Library, 39 Remsen St. (1E), Brooklyn  
Heights 1, New York.

\*FOLK BANJO STYLES (Elektra 217)  
The best record from Elektra for a long  
time, this LP features seven beautiful  
numbers by Tom Paley, some interesting  
work by Art Rosenbaum, and the BANJOS,  
BANJOS, BANJOS of Eric Weissberg and  
Marshall Brickman.

\*Prestige Records will soon add an Irish  
label to their long list. Irishville?  
Gaelicsville? Margaret Barry will lead off.

\*Maybelle Carter: MOTHER MAYBELLE  
(Briar 101) Carter Family songs by one-  
third of the original Carter Family.

\*Jean Redpath, fine Scottish singer,  
will soon have records on both Elektra  
and Prestige.

\*Big Joe Williams will have albums on  
Folkways and Prestige Bluesville soon.

A. L. Lloyd and Ewan MacColl: HAUL ON  
THE BOWLIN' (Stinson 80) Excellent reissue.

Patrick Galvin: IRISH REBEL SONGS,  
Volume One (Stinson 83) Reissue.

\*FOLKSONGS OF THE MIRAMICHI (Folkways 4053)  
Lumber and river songs from the Miramichi  
Folk Festival, Newcastle, New Brunswick.

\*The New Lost City Ramblers will have  
the NLCR, Volume Four, out soon, with an  
album of "moonshinin'" songs to follow.  
Also in the works is a NLCR songbook for  
Oak Publications.

\*Folkways will soon release an album  
featuring Roscoe Holcombe (Side One) and  
Wade Ward (Side Two).

\*Columbia will issue LP's of the fabulous  
Seeger Family concerts (Pete, Mike, Peggy,  
and the NLCR) at Carnegie Hall. The  
label will also issue an album of Cowboy  
Songs by Jack Elliott, Harry Jackson, Ed  
McCurdy, Pete Seeger, etc.

\*Ed Kahn will soon have some good work  
out on Folkways. He did the earlier  
Pete Steele record.

\*FRONTIERS (Folkways 10003) Western  
educational disc featuring McCurdy, Nye,  
Houston, English, Clark, Hinton, etc.

See you next month, folks.

## CURRENT and CHOICE

THE McPEAKE FAMILY OF BELFAST  
(Prestige International 13018)

The best record yet on the Inter-  
national series.

JACK ELLIOTT: (Woody Guthrie's) SONGS  
TO GROW ON (Folkways 7501)

Delightful Guthriana by an early  
disciple of Woody's.

ROBERT JOHNSON: KING OF THE DELTA  
BLUES SINGERS (Columbia 1654)

A legitimate reissue of a major  
portion of the work of one of the  
greatest and most obscure country  
blues singers.

REALLY! THE COUNTRY BLUES  
(Origin Jazz Library 2)

A brilliant reissue collection of  
primitive blues recorded by 12 vir-  
tually unknown blues singers of the  
1920's and early 1930's.

(Available from Origin Jazz Library,  
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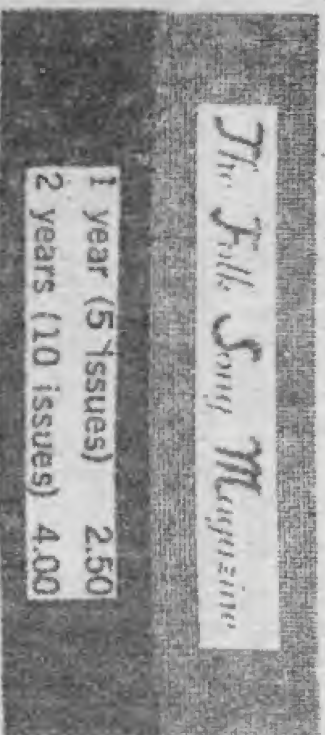
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## THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

**ON OUR COVER...** this month is Frank McPeake, Sr., with Uilleann pipes. McPeake is one of the singers on Caedmon's great **THE FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN**, edited by Alan Lomax and Peter Kennedy, reviewed this issue. He can also be heard, singly and with his two sons, on Prestige International, Folkways (Jean Ritchie's Irish field trip, **AS I ROVED OUT**), and English HMV (recordings by Peter Kennedy). Cover drawing is by Jon Pankake.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

*BY JON PANKAKE & PAUL NELSON*

The 12-volume **SOUTHERN JOURNEY** set, recorded by Alan Lomax, is now available. It is a brilliant continuation of his 7-volume **SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE** series on Atlantic, using many of the same artists. Ask for Prestige International Documentary Series, **THE SOUTHERN JOURNEY**, INT 25001-25012. LSR will devote an entire future issue to reviewing these records ... Sandy Paton's Folk-Legacy label will soon be issuing some fabulous material ... Be sure to subscribe now to LSR: 3 bucks yearly to address below. Do it right now.

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## \*\*\* RECORD REVIEWS \*\*\*

**THE FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN** (Caedmon)  
Collected and edited by Alan Lomax and Peter Kennedy, assisted by Shirley Collins. Musical notation by Michael Bell. Each album contains a descriptive booklet prepared by the editors of the series.

Volume One: **SONGS OF COURTSHIP** (1142)  
Volume Two: **SONGS OF SEDUCTION** (1143)  
Volume Three: **JACK OF ALL TRADES** (1144)  
Volume Four: **THE CHILD BALLADS** (1145)  
Volume Five: **THE CHILD BALLADS** (1146)

(Editors' Note: Guest reviewer for this set of albums is Sandy Paton, Folk-Legacy Records, Huntington, Vermont).

A British folklorist once told me that any criticism of Alan Lomax had to be balanced against the immense debt owed him by folk music lovers the world over — namely, that the BBC might never have undertaken the vast collecting program it began in 1950 without his influence and his incredible persuasiveness. Prior to Lomax's arrival in the British Isles, collecting there had been the sporadic and uncoordinated result of many individual efforts, encouraged, occasionally, by the BBC and the English Folk Dance and Song Society. Beginning in that year, thanks to Alan Lomax's particular genius, the BBC

made it possible for such skillful collectors and scholars as Peter Kennedy, Seamus Ennis, Hamish Henderson, and Lomax himself, to go into the field with excellent recording equipment and prove, once and for all, that British folk music was and is far from "moribund", as it had once been described by no less an authority than Cecil Sharp.

A rich sampling of that proof is now available to us all, again thanks to Alan Lomax, in a magnificent five-volume anthology -- THE FOLKSONGS OF BRITAIN. Indeed, if someone were to offer an annual award for the most important contribution to the field of recorded folk music, this set should win it, hands down, for 1961. For here, brilliantly compressed, is the entire range of British folk music as it lives today in all its rich variety of styles and themes, sung and performed by the finest traditional artists in Britain, excellently recorded, well annotated, and described in affectionate detail. That Mr. Lomax's prose tends, once in a while, to resemble ecstatic poetry is hardly a failing. After all, his romance with folksong has, over the years, produced such marvelous results, we can hardly complain when a few of his love letters are made public.

One can only regret that the series had to be limited (as I assume it had to be) to five records, instead of fifteen, say, or even twenty. For, truly, the only discernible sins in this splendid

production are those of omission. The editors explain that, in order to be as inclusive as possible in a limited space, they have frequently elected to omit verses which were actually sung by the traditional artists. They have included the full texts in the accompanying booklets, however, and have italicized the omitted verses, making it easier for the listener to follow the recorded sampling. Ordinarily, one could scarcely object to such skillful and tasteful editing, but when the singer is such an artist as Mrs. Elizabeth Cronin of County Cork, Ireland, the listener's loss is great. Mrs. Cronin is a singer whose phrasing is so exquisite, whose melodic inventions are so limitless, that to miss even one verse is to be deprived of something wonderful. If this sounds a bit preposterous to you, just play Side B of Volume Four and see if you don't feel, as I do, that the editors might much better have omitted one of the six fragments of BARBARA ALLEN and let us hear all of Mrs. Cronin's beautiful LORD GREGORY.

But to dwell on the occasional unhappy exclusion would be a great injustice, especially in view of so many happy inclusions. To give the literal-minded some idea of the scope of this series, there are, by my rather hurried count, sixty-eight individual artists represented, singing or playing seventy-two songs and tunes and forty Child Ballads. What's more, they sing and play them superbly.

Those who are not familiar with British folk music may well be amazed at the wide variety of vocal styles found in so small a geographic area. Nearly all are represented here, and by champions. Obviously, any criticism of this production must be a venture in hair-splitting -- so, let's get on with it.

Volume One: SONGS OF COURTSHIP  
(Caedmon 1142)

The theme of Volume One is romantic love in its more or less idealistic aspect. Not surprisingly, this noble theme inspires Mr. Lomax to his most poetic heights. We read that "Nature smiles on the young ploughboy and his dairy maid. They are shy, but they move to each other as gracefully as the deer of the forest". This image can hardly be attributed to the "folk fancy" of which he is writing, although the several broadside texts included on the record are nearly as self-conscious in their language. It is, perhaps, fortunate that the majority of these SONGS OF COURTSHIP are blest with "the passionate directness and simplicity of the folk..." Certainly the entire record is blest with great performances -- from Mrs. Cronin's gentle, highly decorated singing of SHULE AROON to Davie Stewart's wild and strident BOGIE'S BONNY BELLE.

One example of unfortunate editing "for reasons of space": the notes to Seamus

Ennis' AS I ROVED OUT (Side B, Band 1) point out that the song is directly related to THE TROOPER AND THE MAID (Child 299), but the verses which clearly establish this relationship have been omitted from the record. Another unfortunate omission, this time one for which the editors cannot be held responsible, is in the McPeake's singing of THE FALSE YOUNG MAN (Side B, Band 7). This song may also be heard on their Prestige recording, where it is titled THE VERDANT BRAES OF SCREEN (THE McPEAKE FAMILY OF BELFAST, Prestige International 13018). For some reason, they apparently failed to sing one verse when Peter Kennedy recorded them, for the verse in which the two lovers are first observed in their sylvan setting is neither on the record nor in the printed text of the Caedmon singing. That the McPeakes themselves left it out is highly probable. I have listened to three separate recordings of their WILD MOUNTAIN THYME (or WILL YOU GO LASSIE GO) and have found that each singing differed from the others to some extent. In the case of THE FALSE YOUNG MAN, the missing verse is the one which makes it clear that the song is sung by an observer, rather than by a participant in the action. I gather that Ken Goldstein referred to exactly this sort of variation when he suggested "depth collecting", or returning to an informant over a period of time in order to observe the changes in his material.



If your budget forces you to purchase this set of records one at a time -- and we can thank Caedmon for issuing them separately, rather than in one, expensive, boxed edition which none of us could afford -- you might as well start with the first of the series. If you can possibly swing it, though, buy the first two volumes at the same time, for, fine as the first one is, you can't get the whole picture of rural romance in the British Isles without the lusty ribaldry of Volume Two to balance the sweet proprieties of Volume One.

Volume Two: SONGS OF SEDUCTION  
(Caedmon 1143)

If anyone still labors under the illusion that British folk music is filled with delicate "tra-la-la's" and is strictly for the lyric tenor on the concert stage, this record should shatter it, finally and forever. The notes quite correctly describe this collection as a "DECAMERON without the intrigue and with very little cynicism, a collection of DROLL STORIES stripped of all pretentiousness." That songs of this type are rarely found in American collections may be the unfortunate result of the fact that much of our country was populated by migrating Puritans and Presbyterians. At any rate, the "gay and permissive spirit" of these lusty ballads is altogether too uncommon among our own traditional artists.

Generally speaking, the editors' ob-

servation that "bawdy ballads are rare in Ireland, common in England and universal in the English-speaking parts of Scotland" is true (although, paradoxically, five of the songs and four of the tunes included in these SONGS OF SEDUCTION are performed by Irish artists). I will, however, take exception to the statement that "the 'blue' songs of Scotland are seldom 'dirty' or unpleasant." Referring to these songs as "blue" is misleading. According to what Scottish singers told me, they, themselves, draw a clear distinction between "blue" and "bawdy". Their "blue" songs, though frequently more imaginative, are every bit as "dirty" and unpleasant as our own fraternity house ditties, and equally unprintable.

Don't get the wrong idea -- the songs on this record are certainly not "blue", but they are quite frankly and delightfully bawdy. As a matter of fact, while it may not please your maiden aunt, it could easily become the most often-played record in your collection. From beginning to end, it is a sort of grand, if hurried, tour through the realm of uninhibited British ribaldry.

The first band draws the listener quickly into the jovial atmosphere of a rural English pub (The Ship Inn, Blaxhall, Woodbridge, Suffolk) where Cyril Poacher and his boisterous companions sing one of their favorites, THE NUTTING GIRL. From there, he travels to Aberdeen, Scotland, and Jeannie Robertson's BONNIE WEE LASS WHO

NEVER SAID NO (Incidentally, if you are following the notes, read "Muses" for WIVES at the bottom of page 7). Then he hears an Irish tinker recorded in the Orkney Isles, then to England again, then Scotland, then Ireland, and so on through a wealth of fine singers and frolicking songs until, at the last, he returns to England where wonderful old Harry Cox (whose "repertoire of sexualia" is described as "extraordinary") sings CRUISING ROUND YARMOUTH, the lustiest song of the lot. Only the most prudish could resist the infectious abandon of these singers and their songs.

A few points of personal reference, not properly the concern of this review: I would rather the editors had chosen to include Harry Cox's more traditional version of THE FOGGY DEW instead of Phil Hammond's... Sam Larner's text of THE MAID OF AUSTRALIA contains, as I recall it, a delightful play on words ("I entered the bush of Australia") not found in Harry Cox's... Jeannie Robertson's SHE WAS A RUM ONE really should have been included.

The omission of John Strachan's little TWA 'N TWA from the printed booklet was, more than likely, an editorial oversight. In case you have trouble with his dialect, I make it out thus:

Twa 'n twa made the bed,  
Twa 'n twa lay doon together;  
When the bed began to heat,  
The ain lay on the banes th' other.

Volume Three: JACK OF ALL TRADES  
(Caedmon 1144)

This record was, at first, a disappointment to me, although I have, since, learned to love it. I guess I expected more of the urban industrial songs, such as those recently discovered by Ewan MacColl and A. L. Lloyd in the ugly, soot-blackened cities of England and Scotland. Perhaps I should have read the notes before I played the record, for the editors explain that since there are so few good field recordings of this contemporary material available, they had to place their emphasis on the older, rural occupations.

Mind you, the songs are good, the singers are fine, and the record is a splendid one. It just wasn't what I had expected it to be and it took me a while to shift gears. These are, primarily, songs of tinkers, tailors, peddlers, millers, and the like, and the harsh note of protest is the exception, rather than the rule. For instance, the only hint of class-consciousness to be found in the Coppers' song of the chimney-sweep is, surprisingly enough, in his haughty declaration that he will work "for none but genterie". In fact, until we get to the "bothy" songs of the north-east of Scotland and the one song of a mine explosion (THE GRESFORD DISASTER, sung by Mrs. A. Cosgrove, a Scottish woman "whose menfolks work in the pits today"), these "country craftsmen" are all so bloody happy with their lot it seems unrealistic.

Their gaiety, however, may be based on the fact that they sing much more of their ale and their sexual exploits than they do of their actual work. The miller sings that he has "courted many a bonnie maid among the bags o' meal-0"; the weaver sings of having in his hand "a jug of punch, aye, and on his knee-0, a tidy wench"; the ploughboy sings of the lass who elects to leave her fine feather bed to "lie in a cold barn shed, wrapped in the arms o' my ploughboy-0". It seems appropriate, somehow, to quote the introduction here: "The farm-laborer of Southern England, particularly, appears to have seen his life through a pleasant, beery haze."

I, for one, will continue to enjoy this record immensely, even after the work now being done by Ewan MacColl in Britain's industrial centers has resulted in the record I expected this one to be.

Volumes Four and Five: THE CHILD BALLADS  
(Caedmon 1145, 1146)

The 305 ballads "canonized" by Francis James Child in his THE ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS have been referred to as "the aristocrats of folksong", not without some justification. The field of folksong scholarship actually began with the arm-chair researches of literary men who unquestionably favored the ballad, probably because, as Alan Lomax puts it, it corresponded "more closely to the canons of fine art literature." This somewhat

snobbish preference has lost most of its power, fortunately, over the scholars of today, who now choose, rather, to examine the whole field of folklore from a more anthropological point of view. Lomax states it very well in his introduction to these two records: "The ballads, taken together with their tunes, cannot be separated from the whole corpus of European folklore, for they share with it a wide range of themes, emotional emphases, tunes and literary devices." Still, the narrative ballad is a most beautiful and impressive form of our "popular" art, and, while it may be unwise to isolate it as such, one can hardly condemn the scholar for granting it a special place in his affections.

Professor Child's great work remains essential to any student of the form, however, and we may be grateful to the present editors for arranging their recorded examples of the genre according to the numbers assigned to each in the final edition of Child's collection. I am sure that this was done strictly as a convenience and not as a vestige of the "Child worship" of earlier times. (The Child numbers of several of the ballads were omitted from the notes, perhaps by accident: THE BROOMFIELD WAGER is #43, CAPTAIN WEDDERBURN'S COURTSHIP #46, THE BATTLE OF HARLAW #163, LANG JOHNNY MORE #251, and THE GOLDEN VANITY #286).

I have raved so much about the singers in the other three volumes of this series, I can only say that I regret, now, having exhausted my vocabulary of superlatives. I really should have held a few back to use here. Suffice it to say that, if I were able to afford only two volumes of this set, I would select these two. (No, I can't honestly say that, for that would mean giving up SONGS OF SEDUCTION and that I wouldn't do). Just look at what they give you: Elizabeth Cronin singing her exquisite LORD GREGORY; John Strachan singing THE ROYAL FORESTER, GLENLOGIE, and at least parts (dammit!) of four other ballads; a fragment of the extremely rare KING ORFEO which Patrick Shuldham-Shaw found in the Shetland Islands; lusty-voiced old Jimmy McBeath singing THE TROOPER LAD; a marvelous singing of THE AULD BEGGARMAN by Maggie and Sarah Chambers. A complete listing of personal favorites would have to include almost everything on the two records, but I can't leave out such artists as Davy Stewart, Jeannie Robertson, Cecelia Costello, Lucy Stewart, Paddy Tunney, Seamus Ennis, etc., etc. Here are the finest artists in the British Isles, singing their finest material. What more could one ask?

Well, there are a couple of things for which I could have asked, as a matter of fact. The first is that the melodeon accompaniment to Jeannie Robertson's THE GYPSY LADDIE had been omitted. It is not

at all unlikely that Jeannie suggested it, herself, but it forces her into an uncomfortably low key and a rigid, hurried tempo. The resultant performance is unworthy of her and not at all typical of her great (one could even call it "majestic") ballad style. Thank God there are better examples of her singing in this series. I have a hunch, incidentally, that the accompaniment was supplied by the collector, Peter Kennedy, who should have known better.

The second thing for which I could have asked is a bit involved and will require some explaining. The editors state, unequivocally, that the collection is performed "entirely by folk singers." The statement is almost "entirely" true, but I do wish they had included more biographical data regarding the singers, if only to clarify their definition of "folk". The main case in point is the cryptic reference to the two singers of the Welsh variant of LORD RANDALL. All we learn from the notes is that it is sung by "Eirlys and Edis Thomas of Glamorgan, South Wales." Both singers are, in fact, of Welsh origin, but Edis Thomas is a London-dwelling member of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, a trained singer, and a fine photographer. (He took the first pictures of my London-born son in 1958). Eirlys Thomas also lives in London and is not related to Edis, so far as I know, although the note quoted above would certainly lead one to think otherwise. I suspect that there was some reluctance on the part of the editors to be

more specific in this case, because she is Peter Kennedy's wife. They may have felt that this fact would, somehow, make her appear less "folk" to the hair-splitting professors who will be (or bloody well ought to be) using these records in their folklore and ballad classes. Regardless of whom she married, "Tommy" Kennedy's lovely voice would seem to me considerably more "folk" than that of her partner in this performance. Indeed, his operatic rendition is completely out of place here, as is the admittedly unobtrusive guitar accompaniment which, again, was probably supplied by Peter Kennedy. The startling contrast of Edis' singing style, so alien to the rest of the record and to the British folk idiom as a whole, would have been much more acceptable, it seems to me, had the editors simply explained who the artists were and that they were including this performance as an interesting example of "how the big ballads can cross language and cultural barriers." The mild "deception-by-omission" was, I think, ill-advised.

Far more important than this minor complaint, however, is the significant fact that lies behind it. Here is a series of five LP's in which only one part of one band is really non-folk in style! Even if it turned out that Emily Bishop actually learned her version of THE BAFFLED KNIGHT from the censored text published for English schools by Cecil Sharp, her singing of it, while somewhat "refined", is essentially in accord with the other perform-

ances on the record. Wonderful old John Strachan sings with such infectious delight that not even the most caviling scholar would reject his performance of LANG JOHNNY MORE as unauthentic, simply because he is "refreshing his memory" from a printed text. (He might, however, question the editor's statement that, in the past, many of the ballads "must have been" sung from print). John Strachan is a great ballad singer whether he learned his songs from his hired farm-hands, from his grandfather, or from Gavin Greig's LAST LEAVES OF ABERDEENSHIRE BALLADS. Every non-traditional singer of British ballads should listen to him again and again, just as they should listen to Davy Stewart and Harry Cox, whose songs are indisputably from oral tradition.

If only we, who have adopted traditional music, rather than inherited it, could learn in a few years of conscious study what these great singers have absorbed in a lifetime of living with the tradition, the "popular revival" might acquire some valid stylistic roots. (Let me stress that this includes the same sort of study of our own great traditional singers). This series should be required listening for every student of folksong and apprentice "folksinger". Imagine what might happen if, for example, Joan Baez, Judy Collins, Peter Yarrow, or Dave Guard were to "sit at the knee" of Jeannie Robertson, Elizabeth Cronin, John Strachan, or Harry

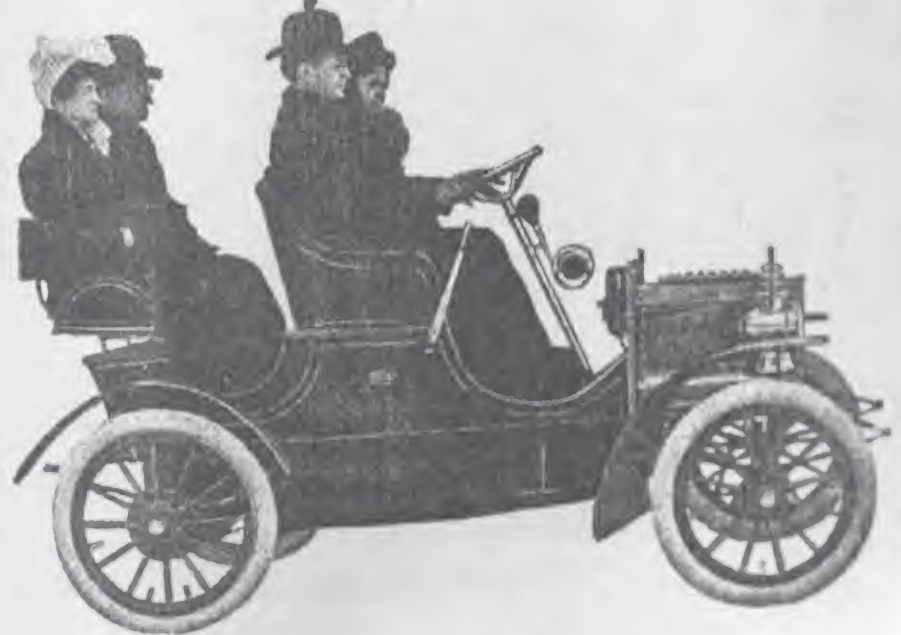
Cox for awhile, deliberately trying to learn something of their artistry, instead of just their songs! The result might be a genuine "emerging tradition", as Ewan MacColl terms it, rather than just a widespread exploitation of traditional music.

**THE HARVESTERS: PASTURES OF PLENTY**  
(Folkways 2406)

The Harvesters on this album are the same Harvesters who recorded for Audio-Video Records, Jerry Silverman's now-defunct label, circa 1958. Their first LP was almost totally nondescript in both style and repertoire, and this one is not much better. The banjoist has picked up more Pete Seeger banjo tricks and everything is over-arranged so as to suggest either the Weavers or the Gateway Singers, but basically the group is its same old dull self, performing songs like PASTURES OF PLENTY, THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND (why don't groups like this leave Guthrie alone?), RED ROSY BUSH, QUE BONITA BANDERA, etc., in the tried-and-true manner of the early pre-Kingston Trio commercial folk groups. Why Moses Asch and Folkways want to bother with this junk is beyond us.

The GID TANNER AND HIS SKILLET LICKERS LP is available only by mail from the Folksong Society of Minnesota, 3218 4th St. S.E., Minneapolis, Minn. \$4.95 postpaid. Send for it today.

We're racing as fast as we can to get the New Lost City Ramblers' new LP on Folkways, #2399. Look what it's got on it: CINDY, BILLY GRIMES THE ROVER, FRANKIE SILVER (Wow!), STACKERLEE, DOLLAR'S ALL I CRAVE, KENO THE RENT MAN, THE MILLER'S WILL, THE STORY THAT THE CROW TOLD ME, RUN MOUNTAIN, TAKE ME BACK TO THE SWEET SUNNY SOUTH, BLACK JACK DAVID, CARTER'S BLUES, THE COO COO BIRD, MOLLY PUT THE KETTLE ON, HAVE A FEAST HERE TONIGHT, CROW BLACK CHICKEN! Wow! It's even better than THE WEST SIDE STORY! Wow!





THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS, Volume Four (Folkways 2399)



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SONNY TERRY WITHOUT BROWNIE MCGHEE....

SONNY'S STORY (Prestige Bluesville 1025)  
LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS AND SONNY TERRY: LAST  
NIGHT BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1029)

Sonny Terry has become so firmly at-  
tached to Brownie McGhee over the years,  
and has gradually lost so much of his own  
identity in the process of accompanying  
McGhee with a few endlessly repeated runs  
on his instrument, that we were beginning  
to wonder if he could any longer exist  
musically independent of McGhee. He has  
not had an LP of his own for many years,  
and Prestige has done collectors a great  
service in presenting Sonny without  
Brownie on two new Bluesville LP's. On  
one of them, he accompanies another singer-  
guitarist, a far greater one than Brownie  
McGhee. The other set is devoted to vocals  
by Sonny.

LAST NIGHT BLUES is very likely the best  
record released yet in what is very likely  
the greatest year in blues recording  
history. Lightnin' has never sung or  
played better as he does seven blues, none  
of which have ever been recorded before in  
anything like their present form, as far as  
I can tell. One instrumental, probably the  
best Lightnin' has recorded, is also in-  
cluded. Lightnin's "mood" here will strike  
most listeners as just right, somewhere  
between the intimacy of his recent Candid  
LP and the comparatively impersonal, noisy



sound of the Herald LP and many of the singles. This is blues for here and now, not an attempt to recall the past as were his Folkways and Candid albums. To bum up, Lightnin' sings out, strongly and forcefully, but without losing any of his emotional poignancy. Terry's harmonica playing is absolutely magnificent. The two men, who could not get beyond humorous pleasantries in their first meeting (DOWN SOUTH SUMMIT MEETING, World-Pacific) are now in complete rapport with each other, and Sonny's playing has never been so meaningful as in his comments on Lightnin's singing in this set. Furthermore, the stimulus of playing with a new partner has brought out a whole flock of new ideas from Sonny. This album proves once and for all that Terry has not become sterile; he has simply heard everything Brownie McGhee has to say, many times, and has come to react in a standardized unvarying way to everything McGhee does. The stimulus of having a new man to accompany (and where could he find a more worthy new man to accompany, one might add) has brought out all the best in Sonny. And Lightnin' (who has very rarely recorded with a harmonica) certainly benefits from the association.

The shadow of Brownie is more prominent in the other album, SONNY'S STORY. Without a Hopkins to inspire him, Sonny reverts to many of the same worn-out old harmonica figures that have made recent Terry-McGhee

LP's as monotonous as SING ALONG WITH MITCH. It is a great delight, however, to hear him do ten vocals on new and old blues, since he is much closer to traditional blues than is Brownie, who has been taking the lion's share of the vocals on the pair's recent LP's. Sonny's singing is very simple and direct, almost devoid of any kind of vocal ornamentation such as Hopkins and most other contemporary blues singers use. Sonny is accompanied by Sticks McGhee ("no pseudonym and no relation"), a reformed city bluesman who has accompanied him before, on Folkways. His guitar playing is very plain, but rock-solid, providing a fine foundation for Sonny, if not much inspiration for him. And there is, of all things, a second harmonica on a few cuts. It is played by J. C. Burris, Sonny's nephew, and the two blow up a storm together on GREAT TALL ENGINE. (Note: It seems likely that SONNY'S SHOUT and LAST NIGHT BLUES were cut at the same session, for Hopkins on LAST NIGHT BLUES addresses a couple of his lyrics to "J. C.", who was apparently in the studio). It should be mentioned that Belton Evans, who loused up so many of the early Bluesvilles with his rickety-tick drumming, plays absolutely perfect blues drums on both these albums, with Leonard Gaskin added on bass on LAST NIGHT BLUES.

One would hesitate to wish an end to the combination of Sonny and Brownie, which has worked so well personally, but Prestige has made an invaluable contribution to Sonny's

record lists with these two albums, and has also given us an incomparable disc by the incomparable Lightnin'.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

#### THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS

(Folkways 602) A 7" LP.

As they say, all good things come in small packages. Here's a little bundle of goodies that everybody, but everybody, will want: collectors of exotic records will treasure it as a rarity (one of the few 7" long-play discs on the American market); children will find it dandy to use as a spare wheel for wagons and tricycles; Limeliter fans will find it just the right size to stuff in chimney holes; and NLCR enthusiasts will find four great songs on it, two of which they are likely to have on other records (FOGGY MOUNTAIN TOP and TALKING HARD LUCK), and two brand new ones, THE MILWAUKEE BLUES from Charlie Poole and the Carter Family's WAVES ON THE SEA. Truly a record as versatile as it is delightful -- so let's all buy it right now! (Reviewer: Miss Nudd E. Buttee)

#### GEORGE AND GERRY ARMSTRONG: SIMPLE GIFTS (Folkways 2335)

Although Mr. and Mrs. Armstrong, a young Wilmette, Illinois, couple, have performed folk music in public, they cannot be considered professionals in any sense of the word. Their album of Anglo-American folk

music confirms a hunch many an observer of the city folk music scene has had: to wit, that a large portion of the most interesting, honest, and artistic city folk music is being produced not by the coffee house egomaniacs and beatnik night club hopefuls, but by dedicated and talented amateurs, motivated simply by a love for the music, who pursue folk music in its natural surroundings -- that of a hobby or of an integral part of family life.

The most impressive facet of this most impressive album is the knowledge and understanding of folk music and its performance that the Armstrongs possess. The songs are carefully notated and thoughtfully arranged and performed in a manner close to but not imitative of actual folk music tradition, and accompanied by well-worked-out and musically interesting dulcimer and guitar playing. Most significant of all is the respect for the music implied by the Armstrong's crediting of the sources of their material.

The fact that the Armstrongs are amateurs has absolutely nothing to do with the quality of their music. Mrs. Armstrong, whose singing constitutes the major part of the record, has a lovely soprano voice that puts to shame that of nearly any professional folknik one would care to name. Moreover, she is a knowledgeable stylist (owing a debt, perhaps, to Jean Ritchie), and her singing of THE JEALOUS BROTHERS, MAIRI'S WEDDING (a song the couple learned on a

visit to Scotland), THE LADY FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY, and BLACKJACK DAVY is not only delicate and touching, but is praiseworthy for the seemingly simple fact that it is appropriate to the songs and does them full justice -- a basic and obvious requisite to folksinging of any worth at all, but one that is somehow always ignored by the Baezs, Hesters, Odettas, and their ilk.

George Armstrong lends a pleasant, if not distinguished, supporting voice to his wife's singing, plays guitar and dulcimer, and even squeaks out a tune on the toy cornstalk fiddle (the first recording we've heard of this commonplace folk "instrument").

The Armstrongs' approach to singing and playing is an extremely gentle and refined one, and is subject to the danger of becoming overly so -- but the couple seems aware of this, and never do their ballads become bloodless, their love songs saccharine, or their dance and game songs cloying or cute. Their album notes state that their songs "are offered not only for your listening enjoyment, but also in the hope that you will learn to sing them yourself." Which is a good and fitting credo for this friendly and attractive album.

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ALAN MILLS AND JEAN CARIGNAN  
(Folkways 3532)

This album is, so the notes say, "unusual as to the fact that Mills adds a bonus of three composed songs in the folk idiom -- and two stories which reveal his talents as an actor as well as a singer." Our advice is if you're buying the album for the above-mentioned "bonus", don't bother. One of the "composed songs in the folk idiom" is a topical song called BATTLE HYMN OF THE REPUBLICANS, 1960 -- all about Dick Nixon. Mills' stories, told in a hammy Hollywood character actor's French Canadian accent, do not speak highly for his "talents as an actor". The album does have some dandy fiddle solos by the incredible Jean Carignan: LORD McDONALD'S REEL, REEL DU PECHEUR, and JIGUE TENFANT. If you like fiddling, we do recommend that you buy the album for them.

TOMMY HUNTER'S CAROLINA STRING BAND:  
ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL  
(Prestige International 13026)

With much of the city interest in authentic folk and country music centered about the traditional string-band (Flatt and Scruggs are doing a brisk business recording and playing concert dates for city fans; the Folkways Anthology and albums by the New Lost City Ramblers and Clarence Ashley and his Gang have become staple items in the collections of knowledgeable fans), it

is interesting to finally hear on a city label a recording of the type of dance band that is currently popular with local radio and dance hall audiences in the Great Smoky region of North Carolina. This collection, mastered at the sacrifice of studio fidelity from tapes of actual radio performances, finds fiddling Tom Hunter's little band blasting out a program of familiar (SALLY GOODIN, GRAY EAGLE, ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL, SOLDIER'S JOY, etc.) instrumentals laced with an occasional vocal by the group's banjoist, Obray Ramsey. Compared to bluegrass and old-timey string-band performing (most of which is conceived these days as stage entertainment rather than as dance music), the music of Hunter's band does not wear well as purely listening entertainment. Hunter's fiddling, consisting of abstract, complex, and highly decorated melodic patterns, is more akin to modern Western swing fiddling than to the old-time hoedown fiddling with its more lilting, simple, and obvious melodic line and double-string harmonies. A listener's mind tends to wander in the face of such complexity -- and the monotony of the unvarying, unimaginative dance beat laid down by the band's rhythm section of guitar and bass is lulling in the extreme. Recommended only to square dance groups and the most hardy string-band enthusiasts, this record will be of minor interest to most LSR readers.

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MEMPHIS SLIM'S TRIBUTE TO BIG BILL BROONZY,  
LEROY CARR, COW COW DAVENPORT, CURTIS JONES,  
JAZZ GILLUM (Candid 8023)  
BLUES BY JAZZ GILLUM (Folkways 3826)

The same trio of musicians appears on both of these albums: Memphis Slim, the pianist (and organist) who has really struck it rich recently, with better than a dozen LP's; Arbee Stidham, the old jive sax man turned blues singer and electric guitarist; and a newcomer to LP, Jazz Gillum, the near-legendary harmonica man of the 1930's.

Gillum is featured on one side only of the Folkways LP. His style and quality of performance have changed little since the 1930's. His singing has a bitterness that can be very appealing, but is a bit stiff, lacking the emotional range of a Broonzy or a Hopkins. His harmonica playing is interesting, but lacks the expression of Sonny Terry's or Little Walter's. He is not really a first-rate artist, but he does manage to sing some listenable blues. Collectors will want to have his version of KEY TO THE HIGHWAY, which both Gillum and Big Bill Broonzy claim to have written. The fact that Gillum once played an old-fashioned parlor organ does not justify Memphis Slim's use of the modern electronic contraption which thoroughly goops up the first three numbers. On the other side, Arbee Stidham sings a pleasant enough program of blues, again defaced by Mr. Hammond's contribution to Negro folk music.

The booklet from this album includes a long and curiously incoherent essay, with many interesting quotes from Gillum.

In a comparison of the two present sets, the Candid LP gets most of the marbles, including perhaps one for the longest album title of the year. Nine of its selections feature the trio, with Memphis sticking close to the good old piano throughout. The three players are much more cohesive on this set than on the Folkways, and it sounds like a real combo, though Memphis Slim by far outclasses his colleagues, and at times Stidham fumbles uncertainly on his instrument. The three men divide up the vocals, which feature tunes by the artists commemorated in the title plus Big Maceo, Roosevelt Sykes, Walter Davis, Blind Blake, and Washboard Sam. Some of the tunes are quite well-known (I FEEL SO GOOD, TROUBLED IN MIND, DIGGIN' MY POTATOES, WORRIED LIFE BLUES, IN THE EVENIN'). Gillum seems more at ease, both vocally and on harp, than on the Folkways set, and Memphis Slim is the genial master of ceremonies as always, contributing here one of his very best performances, capped by three solo numbers representing perhaps his finest work anywhere on LP. Candid Records has a real knack for getting the best out of bluesmen. (May I again suggest that they try recording Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee, none of whose umpteen LP's brings out anything near their best?). Nat Hentoff reveals some of the company's trade

secrets in the liner notes. A fine all-around blues set.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

PEGGY SEEGER: POPULAR BALLADS  
(Folk-Lyric 120)

Characterized by various American folklorists in terms ranging from "the most sensitive musician of all the city singers of folk songs" to "the best ear in the business", Peggy Seeger poses a unique problem to the critic of her recordings: that of finding new superlatives with which to describe each new record she offers. Her fertile musical imagination produces a never-ending flow of original and subtle ideas that her superb instrumental touch translates into the finest accompaniments heard on any modern professional recordings of folk music, and, while she has not been gifted with a rich voice, she has learned how to control it and to use it expressively and creatively to the extent that she is now as fine a folksinger as can be heard outside the ranks of the "folk" themselves.

POPULAR BALLADS finds Peggy for the first time devoting an entire LP to the Anglo-American ballads that constitute the music she finds most personally fascinating and rewarding. The result is perhaps her deepest and most moving album to date -- a flawless performance of eleven ballads, including seven American versions of Child ballads. Her program ranges from a roman-

tic, lyric performance of EARL BRAND to the bittersweet denied love of THE GREEN BEDS, dreamily sung to a chiming autoharp accompaniment, to THE FARMER'S CURST WIFE, cheerful and droll, and culminates in the shattering THE DREADFUL GHOST, a horrific novella of a ballad, sung out freely and dramatically against a snapping, insistent banjo backing.

The folksong specialist may object to the fact that Peggy's vocal style, and specifically the types of decorations she employs, is wandering somewhat afield from the bone of American traditional ballad singing -- and he will have to be conceded his point. Peggy's maturation as a singer and her development of singing style have taken place during her four-year sojourn in England, where she has been out of contact not only with other American singers but with (due to the stiff British import duties that make American recordings extremely difficult to obtain) the field recordings and tapes that have always been her study and her inspiration. It is indeed an anomaly that America's finest young professional folksinger should be a British citizen, and there is no doubt that had Peggy lived and studied the last four years in this country, she would be a different, if not a better, singer than she is now. This, however, is a quirk of fate rather than a reflection on Peggy's artistry, and her music stands not only as a great achievement, but as a living refutation to the death knell being tolled on

behalf of American folk music by those who resent the urbanization of our country.

This brilliant album is available for just \$4.98 (plus 35 cents postage and handling) from Folk-Lyric Records, 1945 Bay Street, Baton Rouge 2, Louisiana.

#### ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER

(\*denotes LP's to be reviewed in LSR)

\*Ewan MacColl: SONGS FROM ROBERT BURNS' MERRY MUSES OF CALEDONIA (Dionysus 1) Limited edition distributed by Folk-Lyric Records, 1945 Bay Street, Baton Rouge 2, La. Unexpurgated. \$8.95.

\*PETER, PAUL, AND MARY (Warner Bros. 1449) Interesting folkum with strong commercial possibilities. Unusual repertoire.

\*BOB DYLAN (Columbia 1779) A chip-off-the-old Guthrie-Elliott-block, Dylan is going to kick up quite a fuss with this fascinating debut album.

\*The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem: HEARTY AND HELLISH! (Columbia 1771) Good rowdy fun recorded at Chicago's Gate of Horn.

\*MISSISSIPPI'S BIG JOE WILLIAMS AND HIS NINE-STRING GUITAR (Folkways 3820) Blues by one of the best.

\*THE BAMBOUSHAY STEEL BAND (Folkways 3835) Gene Bluestein and Michigan State University students.

\*Robin Christenson: YOU CAN SING IT YOURSELF (Folkways 7625) "Folksinger and teacher, Grades 3-6."

**\*FOLK FESTIVAL (ABC-Paramount 408)**  
With Oscar Brand, Casey Anderson, Jean Ritchie (singing a beautiful LOVING HANNAH), Cynthia Gooding, George Britton, Tom Pasle, Charlie Byrd, Mike Hall.

**\*The Lilly Brothers (Everett and Bea) and Don Stover: FOLK SONGS FROM THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS (Folkways 2433)**  
One of the best albums Mike Seeger has produced for Folkways.

**\*THE 37th OLD-TIME FIDDLERS CONVENTION AT UNION GROVE, NORTH CAROLINA (Folkways 2434)** Edited by Mike Seeger and John Cohen.

**\*THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS, Volume Four (Folkways 2399)** Mike Seeger, John Cohen, and Tom Paley do it again!

**\*Pink Anderson: MEDICINE SHOW MAN (Prestige Bluesville 1051)** Soon to be released.

**\*Scrapper Blackwell: MR. SCRAPPER'S BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1047)** Soon to be released.

**\*Rev. Gary Davis: SAY NO TO THE DEVIL (Prestige Bluesville 1049)** Soon to be released.

**\*K. C. Douglas: BIG ROAD BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1050)** Soon to be released.

**\*Snooks Eaglin: THAT'S ALL RIGHT (Prestige Bluesville 1046)** Soon to be released.

**\*Brownie McGhee: BROWNIE'S BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1042)** Soon to be released.

**\*Sidney Maiden: TROUBLE AN' BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1035)** Harmonica blues.

**\*Blind Willie McTell: LAST SESSION (Prestige Bluesville 1040)** The late blues great well-recorded in his last sessions.

**\*Memphis Willie B.: HARD WORKING MAN BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1048)** Soon to be released.

**\*Doug Quattelbaum: SOFTEE MAN BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1065)** Soon to be released.

**\*Tampa Red: DON'T JIVE ME (Prestige Bluesville 1043)** Soon to be released.

**\*Henry Townsend: TIRED BEIN' MISTREATED (Prestige Bluesville 1041)** Soon to be released.

**\*Mercy Dee Walton: PITY AND A SHAME (Prestige Bluesville 1039)** Piano blues with Sidney Maiden's harmonica an added treat.

**\*Lucille Hegamin, Victoria Spivey, Alberta Hunter: BLUES WE TAUGHT YOUR MOTHER (Prestige Bluesville 1052)** Early jazz blues.

**\*Lightnin' Hopkins and Jack Elliott** will have new albums for Prestige very soon.

**\*Tossi Aaron: TOSSI SINGS FOLK SONGS (Prestige International 13027)** Distinctive repertoire, straight-forward singing.

**\*Roger Abrahams: MAKE ME A PALLET ON THE FLOOR (Prestige International 13034)** Soon to be released.

**\*Arthur Argo: LYRICA EROTICA, Volume Two (Prestige International 13048)** Soon to be released.

**\*Evelyn Beers: THE GENTLE ART (Prestige International 13053)**

\*Robert "Fiddler" Beers: PSALTY PSONGS  
WITH PSALTERY AND PFIDDLE (Prestige  
International 13047) Pforget it.

\*THE BEST OF ISLA CAMERON (Prestige  
International 13042) Soon to be released.

\*Bonnie Dobson: DEAR COMPANION  
(Prestige International 13031)

\*Louisiana Honeydrippers: LOUISIANA  
BLUEGRASS (Prestige International 13035)  
Soon to be released.

\*Ewan MacColl and A. L. Lloyd: SEA SONGS  
(Prestige International 13043) Soon to be  
released.

\*U. Utah Phillips: NOBODY KNOWS ME  
(Prestige International 13040) Soon to be  
released.

\*Obray Ramsey: GATEWAY TO THE GREAT  
SMOKIES (Prestige International 13030)  
Soon to be released.

\*Jean Redpath: SONGS OF A WEE LASSIE  
(Prestige International 13041) Soon to  
be released.

\*Tony Saletan: I'M A STRANGER HERE  
(Prestige International 13036) Soon to be  
released.

\*Peggy Seeger: THE THREE SISTERS  
(Prestige International 13029) Beautiful.

\*Harry and Jeannie West: ROAMIN' THE BLUE  
RIDGE (Prestige International 13038) Soon  
to be released.

John Greenway: THE BIG ROCK CANDY  
MOUNTAIN (Washington 710) Reissue from  
Riverside.

Paul Clayton: BRITISH AND AMERICAN  
MURDER BALLADS (Washington 727) Reissue  
from Riverside.

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

BARRELHOUSE BUCK: BACK COUNTRY BARRELHOUSE  
(Folkways 3554)

Robust and virile piano playing by one  
of the old blues greats. No piano fan  
will want to miss it.

BLUES FELL THIS MORNING  
(English Philips BBL 7369)

Very likely the greatest of all the  
blues anthologies. Available from Agate  
& Company, Ltd., 10 Rathbone Place, Oxford  
St., London W. 1. England, for \$5.25.

GID TANNER AND HIS SKILLET LICKERS  
(Folksong Society of Minnesota 15001-D)

Perhaps the finest of the 1920-1930  
old-timey string-bands, the Lickers are  
here presented for the first time on  
modern LP. An excellent reissue of old  
78rpm discs. Available from the Folksong  
Society of Minnesota, 3218 4th St. S.E.,  
Minneapolis, Minn., for \$4.95.

THE FOLKLORE OF JOHN LEE HOOKER  
(Vee-Jay 1033)

John Lee's greatest LP.

LUCY STEWART: TRADITIONAL SINGER FROM  
ABERDEENSHIRE, SCOTLAND, Volume One,  
CHILD BALLADS (Folkways 3519)

Beautiful Scottish ballad singer  
recorded by Ken Goldstein. This LP is  
the first of a many-volume set aimed at  
documenting the folklore of a Scottish  
family. "Aunt Lucy" is magnificent.



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*The 2005*

no. 21



THE LITTLE SANDY  
POETRY ROOM REVIEW

THE 2005

THE 2005

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This 200.5 (21-29)

**ON OUR COVER...** this month is the great Leadbelly. Huddle can be heard on Folkways (for review of the new **LEADBELLY SINGS FOLK SONGS**, see page 15) and Stinson. Our special thanks to Dave Glover for donating our first (and probably last) professionally printed cover. The big #21 on the cover indicates that we are now the second oldest folk magazine in the United States. With this issue, we pass **CARAVAN**, a fine magazine which unfortunately folded with issue #20. Long live ourselves!

### EDITORS' COLUMN

By JON PARKAKE & PAUL NELSON

Folkways' Uncle Dave Macon record will be out soon ... Quote of the month: "The study of American folk music does not begin with the Library of Congress recordings, but rather must start with the commercial recordings of the 1920's and '30's, many of which had much influence on Library of Congress singers."  
(continued on page 35)

Readers whose subscriptions run out with this issue will find an "X" marked in the box to the lower right. Three dollars will bring you 12 more nifty issues. LSR, 3220 Park Av. So., Mpls, 7.

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Editors' Note: The following is a report on the activities of the Second Annual University of Chicago Folk Festival, held February 2-4 of this year.

### THE SECOND ANNUAL UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO FOLK FESTIVAL

The first University of Chicago Folk Festival, under the very able direction of Mike Fleischer, pretty well revolutionized the whole idea of a folk festival. It veered almost diametrically opposite the commercialism of Newport and set out to get the very best traditional performers it could obtain, along with a sprinkling of the top city folk music performers. Horton Barker, Roscoe Holcombe, Frank Proffitt, Memphis Slim, Elizabeth Cotten, the Stanley Brothers, Arvella Gray, Alan Mills, Jean Carignan, Sandy Paton, Fleming Brown, George and Gerry Armstrong, Frank Warner, and the New Lost City Ramblers were among the artists who performed at the first Chicago Festival.

This year, Mike Michaels, the new director, did his best to follow in the heralded footsteps of Mike Fleischer. His best proved to be good enough. The roster of performers he mustered included such notables as Clarence (Tom) Ashley, Big Joe Williams, the New Lost City Ramblers, Jean and Edna Ritchie, Reverend Gary Davis, Jack Elliott, the Bluegrass Gentlemen, Speckled Red, Bill Chitman, and the Staple Singers. In addition, he greatly

improved the academic part of the Festival, summoning such folk scholars as D. K. Wilgus and Sam Eskin for afternoon lectures.

Leading off the Festival was the traditional "meet the performers" reception held late Friday afternoon in Ida Noyes Hall. Everyone had a pleasant time gawking at the performers, renewing old friendships, watching the folkniks wander around in their traditional non-conformist outfits, and speculating on the truth to the rumor that Jack Elliott was still in Niagara Falls in an old telephone truck and wasn't going to make it to the Festival on time. Ed Cowan, Canadian newspaperman and one of Jack's buddies, told us that this happens everytime Jack's supposed to do a concert: somebody starts a rumor that he's not coming, everybody gets all worked up, people start looking around for a last-minute replacement (this happened in Chicago), and in walks Jack, wondering what all the fuss is about. Sure enough, just as the reception was breaking up, Jack, wearing a huge black cowboy hat, came dashing in the door, apologized for being late, and said he'd had trouble getting his Bell Telephone truck across the Canadian border.

The New Lost City Ramblers opened the first night of the concerts with a great program of "new" numbers (most of which are available on Folkways 2399). They did sparkling versions of SAIL AWAY LADIES and

CROW BLACK CHICKEN. John Cohen then did a solo COUNTRY BLUES with banjo (learned from the "Dock" Boggs recording on the Folkways Anthology) that brought the house down. Mike and Tom teamed up for the double-banjo TAKE ME BACK TO THE SWEET SUNNY SOUTH. The whole group did a beautiful BLACK JACK DAVID (from the Carter Family), and Tom picked out a standout STACKERLEE on the guitar. "Bluegrass," announced Mike Seeger with a big grin. "That's just avant-garde Rambler music!"

Next came Big Joe Williams and his bassist, Ramson Knowling. Joe, an enormous man more in width than height, played a battered old Silvertone electrified guitar (it looked as if it were made of ancient weather-beaten roof shingles) and performed a truly exciting program of blues. SLOPPY DRUNK BLUES, RED CROSS STORE, and Joe's own BABY PLEASE DON'T GO all received exceptional treatment: Joe played and projected his blues with such a fierce pride and violent delivery that the crowd was immediately caught up in his work. Emcee Archie Green had to break the Festival's "no encore" rule and grant him an extra number. No one deserved it more.

The next act was perhaps the high spot of the Festival for most of us. "We're not professional show people," announced Clarence (Tom) Ashley. "We're just a group of farmers who play, pick, and sing around a little in the old country way...nothing very modern... we're farmers." Ashley, decked out in felt hat and green suspenders, introduced fiddler

Fred Price ("His wife does the farming and he does the fiddling around"), guitarist Clint Howard ("You'd think a smile would break his jaw"), and guitarist-banjoist Doc Watson ("The workhorse of the gang... he sort of tickles the guitar a little") to an enthusiastic audience. After a little tuning trouble ("We don't come out here all tuned up like city people," cracked curly-headed Clint Howard), Clint, Doc, and Fred did a few fine old-timey numbers, and then Ashley did THE COO COO BIRD ("Somebody must have heard that! We turned the bird loose in the '20's and she's still flying"), quietly and beautifully. It completely hushed the huge crowd. We all knew we had been confronted with the wonderful magic of real folk music, and the experience was memorable. WALKIN' BOSS was next, with Tom on banjo and Doc on guitar, and the music just flowed out, simply and naturally, as in all great art; Ashley's quiet and dignified banjo played the lead and Doc boomed out beautiful bass runs on the guitar. Before the Festival was over, Watson was to prove his mastery of both guitar and banjo was something near legendary. He made a profound impression on everyone both as a fine musician and as a fine man.

Jean Ritchie's older sister, Edna, a Kentucky school teacher, followed Ashley and his gang. She sings almost exactly like Jean (although perhaps not with as much "artistry") and has just made LP's

for both Folk-Legacy and Prestige. She did fine versions of THE FOREIGN LANDER, JACKERO, GROUNDHOG, and THE BLACKEST CROW, some unaccompanied and some with dulcimer. Her unaccompanied singing of THE CUCKOO was probably her best number.

On came Reverend Gary Davis carrying his cherry red "Miss Gibson" guitar. Davis, recognized as one of the greatest folk instrumentalists in the United States, provided the Festival with many unforgettable moments. (According to experts, he picked the grandest ENGINE 143 ever heard during Sunday's guitar workshop). There is an almost foreboding quality of immense deliberation and solidarity in Gary's artistry. One look at him and you know immediately that here is an absolute master of the guitar: every move is sure and strong and straight to the mark; no energy is wasted in flashily exhibitionalism. Davis did some of his great numbers (YOU GOT TO MOVE, IF I HAD MY WAY, CLOSER WALK WITH THEE) and received the biggest ovation of the night. Once again, the "no encore" rule was shattered, but nobody seemed to mind. Gary displayed all the wisdom and maturity of a truly monumental folk artist all during the Festival (and was equally out of tune all three days). His dazzling guitar accompaniments and powerfully emotional street singing style were something none of us will soon forget.

Jack Elliott had the unfortunate task of trying to follow Davis, Edna Ritchie, Tom

Ashley, and Big Joe Williams to close out Friday night's program. He was none too successful artistically (his usual mannerisms seemed quite objectionably theatrical and out of place after the sincerity and unpretentiousness of the preceding acts), although the crowd loved him as he rambled all over the stage, at times singing and playing completely away from all the microphones. Jack's charm could win over anybody, but his performances were below his usually high standards on this night.

Jack Elliott, Win Stracke (Chicago's Burl Ives), and Ella Jenkins gave a special children's concert Saturday morning. Ella and Win sang for the first hour-and-a-half (which is pretty long for a kid's concert) and by the time poor Jack got on, most of the kids were so tired and restless that he couldn't keep them in their seats. Jack is fantastic with children, however, and he wandered right out into the audience with them, playing and singing while chasing them up and down the aisles. All the kids had a lot of fun, and so did most of the adult members of the morning's crowd.

D. K. Wilgus' frank and unabashed ("We might as well name names") lecture on Saturday afternoon was undoubtedly the academic high point of the entire Festival. Mr. Wilgus, who is certainly living proof that the image of the folk scholar as a musty old fossil working in an Ivory Tower

is entirely false, stoutly defended the position of the scholar ("The scholar is the performer's best friend"), spoke with interest on the urban folk music revival, and opened several eyes on many critical points of folklore. He joked about his incurring the wrath of several older folklorists as a hillbilly singer during his college days. (We were especially pleased when, upon being introduced to him, he grinned and said, "Well, I'm glad to meet you. You're the only other bastards in folk music. You're not afraid to dislike somebody"). Unfortunately, we were unable to attend Sam Eskin's earlier lecture, but were told later that it was very good. Sam spiced his talk with some of his own singing and guitar playing, we understand. If he were anywhere near as good as Wilgus, it must have been something.

The Bluegrass Gentlemen from southern Illinois led off Saturday's concert. They were a far cry from last year's great bluegrass act, the Stanley Brothers, and were, by and large, the most disappointing performers in this year's Festival. They can play well enough, but they have no vocal punch ("apparent leanings toward college-style singing" was the way John Cohen put it), and, as anybody knows, a strong lead singer is essential to a good bluegrass band.

Edna Ritchie and Big Joe Williams were the next singers, and both did well. Chicago's own Staple Singers made their Festival debut

immediately after Big Joe and promptly became the crowd's favorite for the remaining nights. Father Roebuck Staples and his three children play and sing with what might be called a "wild restraint", and the results suggest tremendous emotional undercurrents and surging power just about to be unleashed. They urged the audience to clap and sing with them on their later numbers, and emcee Studs Terkel (who displayed admirable restraint himself this year) had a difficult time persuading the crowd to let them go.

Bill Chitman opened the second half of Saturday night's program with BARBARA ALLEN. Chitman is from the Ozarks and sings and plays in a manner somewhat akin to Bob Carpenter (heard on Alan Lomax's Atlantic SOUTHERN FOLK HERITAGE SERIES): rough and gruff, hale and hearty, with the old-style Jimmie Rodgers guitar picking. He was nervous at first, but soon settled down to reel off a likeable enough, if somewhat superficial, batch of songs.

Gary Davis excited the large audience with his vocal and instrumental mastery and played encore after encore.

Tom Ashley ("Storyteller, colorful figure, and all-around man") did some beautiful numbers during his Saturday night stint. He sang a marvelous unaccompanied BARBARA ALLEN, received a tremendous ovation from the crowd, was obviously very moved, and said he wished he'd been born in Chicago. He then sang and played OMIE

WISE with Doc Watson playing the guitar along with him. Fred Price wowed the crowd with his fiddling on LEE HIGHWAY BLUES and was urged to encore with RICHMOND BLUES. Doc Watson gave validity to the statement that he is the greatest country guitarist since Riley Puckett with some great guitar work on PRETTY LITTLE PINK. As always, Clint Howard provided rock-solid second guitar and brilliant lead singing on almost every number. The group closed the program with beautiful versions of AMAZING GRACE and WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN, both led by Doc's guitar and lead singing.

Banjo and guitar workshops were conducted early in the afternoon on Sunday (Tom Paley and Gary Davis for the guitar; Mike Seeger, John Cohen, Doc Watson, and Clarence Ashley for the banjo), and, later, John Cohen and Jean Ritchie (who was only present for the last day of the Festival) gave talks on their collecting experiences. Watson flabbergasted everyone at the banjo workshop by announcing that he could play Scruggs-style three-finger banjo with just two fingers. He proceeded to demonstrate, and, sure enough, he could -- so well, in fact, that a trained ear couldn't tell the difference. Doc and Tom did some "ballits" at the workshop that were the very quintessence of old-timey Southern Mountain folk music. Later, a panel discussion composed of Ashley, Watson, Cohen, and Seeger talked of the early recordings of the '20's and '30's.

D. K. Wilgus acted as moderator. Doc Watson impressed all with his profound and highly articulate comments on hill country music and the men who make it.

Speckled Red started off Sunday night's concert with some oddly quiet and dignified barrelhouse piano playing. Red, a friendly and humorous looking man, played some of his famous songs, notably THE DIRTY DOZENS, his big 1928 hit. He sang just as softly and modestly as he played, yet seemed to be having a great time performing in front of such a large and appreciative audience.

Jack Elliott followed and he more than made up for his Friday night's performance. The mannerisms were now almost totally discarded as he sang a program of almost straight Woody Guthrie songs ("I like them the best"): a great GYPSY DAVY, TALKING FISHING BLUES, PRETTY BOY FLOYD, 1913 MASSACRE, and HARD AIN'T IT HARD with Tom Paley. He also did I BELONG TO GLASGOW for Scottish Jean Redpath, who was to sing later that night. Jack, one of the most popular performers of the Festival, was also one of the best Sunday night.

Ashley and his gang were again magnificent. Tom did an old medicine show number complete with jigging (I HAD BUT FIFTY CENTS) while Doc played some hilariously appropriate guitar runs, Tom and Doc did a fabulous SADIE (or BAD LEE BROWN), and the whole group did a marvelous old-timey PEG-AND-AWL that took us all back to 1929

(continued on page 34)



"GID TANNER AND HIS SKILLET LICKERS are after me! Gid, Riley Puckett, Clayton McMichen, Fate Norris, Lowe Stokes, and the whole gang! If you'd only send \$4.95 to the Folksong Society of Minnesota, maybe they'd leave me alone! Why don't you do it today so I can reload!" FSSMLP 15001-D

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**BAYOU BLUEGRASS: THE LOUISIANA HONEYDRIPPERS.** Led by banjoist Jim Smoak, who has played with such topflight country music bands as those of Bill Monroe and Earl Scruggs, the Louisiana Honeydrippers perform a varied program with emphasis on the folksongs of the Deep South. FL 122 \$4.98

**BOLL WEEVIL AND BOSSMAN BLUES.** Roosevelt Charles, Otis Webster, and others. In these blues which grew out of the fading cotton economy the singers express in grim or comic irony the underlying feelings of colored sharecroppers. To be issued February, 1962.

**PEGGY SEEGER: POPULAR BALLADS.** Ancient ballads which originated in England and Scotland. FL 120 \$4.98

**HOT BLUES: SMOKY BABE AND HIS FRIENDS.** Vigorous colorful country blues, recorded in their natural setting, accompanied by guitar, harmonica, and stamplor feet. **DOWN BEAT** found Smoky "Impressive" in his appearance in Country Negro Jam Sessions. FL 118 \$4.98

## \* \* \* RECORD REVIEWS \* \* \*

### LEADBELLY SINGS FOLK SONGS (Folkways, 2488)

From his legendary archives, Moses Asch has brought forth another stack of vintage Leadbellies -- and a mighty stack it is. The sixteen tracks of this LP provide an ideal sampling of the lighter side of Leadbelly's vast repertoire. The album seems to be intended mainly as an introduction to Leadbelly for those who don't own many of his records: there is a lot of duplication (though not always in the same performance) of other Leadbelly albums. Such Leadbelly favorites as **MEETING AT THE BUILDING**, **ON A MONDAY**, **MAN GOING AROUND TAKING NAMES**, and **LINING TRACK** are included, in addition to stunning performances of **KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF HER** and **JEAN HARLOW**, a pair of infectious old-timey tunes. Woody Guthrie and Cisco Houston join Huddie for classic performances of **STEWBALL**, **ALABAMA BOUND**, and **FIDDLER'S DRAM**, and Sonny Terry appears on **OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN**. All four join for **WE SHALL BE FREE**.

Despite the duplication, this album is well worth the money for all buyers: no real Leadbelly fan will want to be without the new material presented here. Folkways has done a magnificent job of restoring life to the worn acetates and tapes that make up the source material for this set: never has Leadbelly sounded so well on records. It is a vast improvement over the



muffled sound of the early Folkways, and the tinny Stinsons. The booklet is a real treasure: it contains not only the words but also the music to the songs, a la SING OUT! It also contains a long prose poem on Leadbelly by Woody Guthrie (reprinted from AMERICAN FOLKSONG) which says most of what there is to say about folk music, and must be read by anybody who claims or wishes to know anything about folk music.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

#### NEW FOLKS (Vanguard 9096)

Here, on a disc priced at \$2.98 "for a limited time only", Vanguard serves up a sort of sampler of things to come on that label. Judging from the performances on this record, the future of Manny Solomon & Company looks fairly rosy.

Among the "new folks" making their debut here are a roaring, shades-of-Bill Monroe, New York City bluegrass band, the Greenbriar Boys, and a young Georgia-born, Columbia University-educated singer-collector, Hedy West, who is probably the most promising female city folksinger since the advent of Peggy Seeger. The other two-fourths of the album feature lesser lights. "Pleasant" pretty aptly sums up both the strengths and weaknesses of David Gude, while "horrible" seems a kind description of the singing of the Bibb-Belafonte-influenced Jackie Washington.

The "stars" of the album, the Greenbriar Boys -- John Herald, guitar; Ralph Rinzler, mandolin; Bob Yellin, banjo -- take most of their material from the bluegrass and roots of bluegrass recordings of the '1940's to the present day. This is a musically rich area of study that is as yet comparatively untapped by most serious collectors and folklorists (far too many turn up their noses at the mere mention of Bill and Charlie Monroe, Reno and Smiley, the Stanley Brothers, Flatt and Scruggs, etc.), and, as the Greenbriars prove here, there is much more of the raw bone of American folk music in this material than in all the records of the coffee house folkniks put together. Indeed, we now have almost the whole spectrum of recorded country folk music -- from the 1930's to the present -- reflected in the work of our two best city folk music groups: the New Lost City Ramblers, and, now, the Greenbriar Boys.

The Greenbriars get off to an auspicious start on this disc with a furious bluegrass version of KATY CLYNE, done hell-for-leather, and displaying the group's amazing instrumental proficiency (man for man, they can outplay any other city group) and absolutely believable country sound. There follows a fine rendition of Charlie Monroe's I'M COMING BACK BUT I DON'T KNOW WHEN, a beautiful song that finally gets the revival it has long deserved. John Herald's vocal on STEWBALL is wonderfully Bill Monroe-tinged, and an accomplishment of the first order.

Banjo and washboard are featured on the delightful WAY DOWN IN THE COUNTRY. To round things off, there is a sizzling instrumental, RAWHIDE, spotlighting Rinzler's exceptional mandolin playing.

Hedy West has collected a great deal of her unique repertoire right out of the Appalachians (she soon hopes to publish a volume of north Georgia folksong), and she sings it in a lovely, almost elusively charming, manner that strongly suggests the traditional Southern Mountain folk-singing style. We are treated to haunting versions, sung with banjo, of DRUNKARD'S LAMENT, MOON WILL BE A-BLEEDING, I HAD A NOTION, and PRETTY POLLY, all of which give evidence that we are here confronted with a first-rate city folk artist of great sensitivity. To complete her program, Miss West sings a beautiful THE LARK, accompanying herself on the dulcimer. The strength and quality of her texts (not to mention their rarity) and the style in which she sings and plays her songs mark Hedy West as an important addition, both as a singer and collector, to folk music. We at LSR eagerly await her first solo album.

Gude, a young Boston singer who plays both 6-string and 12-string guitar, fails to create any impressions on a program of blues, Negro prison songs, and children's classics. Washington whimpers his way through some pseudo-art songs and spirituals in a manner more akin to R&B than

folk music.

The fine work of the Greenbriar Boys and Hedy West make this set well worth its \$2.98 price tag. These "new folks" will be heard from again.

GRANDPA JONES MAKES THE RAFTERS RING  
(Monument 4006)

STRINGBEAN: OLD TIME BANJO PICKIN' AND  
SINGIN' (Starday 142)

Those observers of the professional country music scene with an eye for the symbolic will find it significant that the two most old-fashioned and most nearly traditional artists in the field, Stringbean and Grandpa Jones, have been tolerated on country music shows in the last two decades only as bewigged and costumed clowns, expected to provide a maximum of comic relief and a minimum of music. Not that the role itself is a dishonest one, for both men are the last descendants of a long and honorable line of rural American entertainer-musicians and medicine show men: professionals who could compose and perform topical and comic material, sing the old English ballads and love songs, break into a buck and wing, deliver a snappy monologue, or act in a skit, all the while counting the house with one eye and lining up customers for their wares with the other -- men like Fiddlin' John Carson, or Tom Ashley, or the king of them all, Uncle Dave Macon. But the modern

country music entrepreneurs have removed String and Grandpa from the position of importance their talents deserve, submerging them in electronic rhythm groups and subordinating them to the yodeling drugstore cowboys and frowzy female singers with their insipid, lovesick pop songs that comprise the mainstream of modern "down home" professional music.

We are fortunate, then, to be able to examine at our leisure the music of these two performers on the above named LP's (Stringbean's first; Grandpa's third). On the basis of recorded performances, Stringbean would seem to be the more important, gifted, and versatile musician of the two. String (real name: David Akeman) plays his banjo on all of his numbers, using both the old-time frailing method and his own unique rattling, syncopated, bluegrassy sounding brand of double-thumbing. The fourteen songs heard on this LP are about equally divided between solo performances and performances backed with guitars and bass (a vocal chorus mercifully comes in on only three numbers), and there is a minimum of uninteresting titles (STRINGBEAN AND HIS BANJO, HERDING CATTLE IN A CADILLAC COUPE DE VILLE, etc.). Most of the songs are excellent versions of traditional and old-time songs, some correctly titled (KEEP MY SKILLET GOOD AND GREASY, WORKING ON A BUILDING, WHY DO YOU BOB YOUR HAIR GIRLS?, 20 CENT COTTEN AND 90 CENT MEAT),

and some disguised (the song titled here BARNYARD BANJO PICKIN' is HOT CORN COLD CORN, POLLY is PRETTY POLLY, BIRDIE is LITTLE BIRDIE, WAKE UP LITTLE BETTY is a version of DARLING COREY). Though Stringbean's costume is the height of absurdity, he doesn't ham up his performances, preferring rather to deliver both comic and serious songs in a laconic, snuffy, drawling manner. His frailing touch on the banjo is exquisite, and is heard to best effect on the disc's two finest cuts (solo performances both): PRETTY POLLY, sung in a moving, dispassionate style, and very nearly the equal of any recorded performance of this song; and KENTUCKY AND TENNESSEE, a song new to us, one of those innumerable half-lyric and half-sardonic banjo tunes which attempts to hide its tenderness in breezy, rowdy language ("My gal is a pretty little lady/A little plump but not too heavy/None on the line can outshine/That pretty little gal of mine"). Those followers of country music who have been tantalized by String's brief appearances on country shows will treasure this album; those city fans of banjo music who have not previously heard of String will find this record a genuine treat, and infinitely more satisfying than any album of city banjo picking.

Grandpa Jones, as delightful as he is, seems incapable of any emotion(?) more profound than rambunctiousness, never has a half-serious moment, and is probably the

only entertainer in America who can satirize country music, folk music, banjo playing, his audience, and himself effortlessly and simultaneously. His forte is corn, pure and unadulterated, delivered in an outlandish nasality somewhere between a twang and a whine. Exaggerated hoots, theatrical cackles and giggles, asides, and noisemaking are integral ingredients in his performances. His banjo frailing is as effective as it is basic, though in recent years Jones has used the instrument as little more than a prop, and less than half of his recordings have any banjo on them at all. Grandpa never appears without a comfortable rhythm section behind him. GRANDPA JONES MAKES THE RAFTERS RING is his poorest LP to date, containing only five numbers with banjo, and rounded out with seven modern C&W banalities that are as uninteresting as their titles: I'VE JUST BEEN GONE TOO LONG, COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS, I GUESS YOU DON'T REMEMBER NOW, etc. The horrible vocal chorus and accompaniment of piano, bass, drums, and blaring electric guitar on the latter cuts are even more objectionable than the songs themselves. All of the banjo tunes, excepting MAKE THE RAFTERS RING, a Paul Clayton original that would be appropriate for the Kingston Trio, are excellent -- especially GROUNDHOG and ALL NIGHT LONG. And the album's finest number, GOING 'CROSS THE SEA, a "banjer" tune so full of tradi-

tional color and imagery ("Eagles on the mountain, big fish in the sea/Don't give a darn fer no darn girl that don't give a darn fer me") that one doesn't believe for a minute the note that credits authorship of the song to Merle Travis (who is also responsible for the album notes, a life history of and tribute to Grandpa in fourteen stanzas of unreadable verse) is almost worth the price of the album alone. Jones fans will want this one, but those who haven't heard him yet (and every folk music fan ought to) should make GRANDPA JONES SINGS HIS GREATEST HITS (King 554) their first buy.

HENRY THOMAS SINGS THE TEXAS BLUES!  
(Origin Jazz Library 3)

The third release of the Origin Jazz Library brings us fourteen recordings by Henry Thomas, a songster from the 1920's (previously heard on Origin Jazz Library 2, REALLY! THE COUNTRY BLUES, and on the Folkways Anthology) whose repertoire drew from a wide range of Negro traditions. Unlike most of his contemporaries, who were only able to record blues (the most popular Negro song style at the time), Thomas was fortunate in being able to record Negro music of many different types. He was a versatile performer who actually seemed more at home doing play-party tunes, ballads, and ragtime numbers than he did with the blues. Ragtime figurations keep creeping

into the blues he does on this set.

Thomas is one of the most high-spirited performers of all time. Whanging away on his open-tuned guitar, singing at the top of his voice, and tooting on his "shepherd's pipes", he can be truly infectious on play-party tunes like RUN MOLLIE RUN and THE LITTLE RED CABOOSE. There are classic performances of BOB MCKINNEY (a ballad in the STACK-O-LEE tradition) and JOHN HENRY (in which he has our hero riding the blinds!). Also included is his specialty, THE FOX AND THE HOUNDS, representing the old tradition from which the virtuoso Sonny Terry developed his FOX CHASE. Thomas' blues show a much closer kinship with tunes like these, and with ragtime, than they do with the field holler from which Blind Lemon's blues developed. His blues in this set nonetheless mirror early stages in blues development in such ways as their frequent tendency to repeat the same line of lyrics three times in the 12-bar chorus, rather than using the "AAB" pattern generally found.

Thomas is perhaps not quite as easy to listen to as he was in his heyday. Collectors used to the emotional depth of later blues may find it hard to take him seriously. It is doubtful, however, that Thomas meant himself to be taken very seriously: he was an entertainer, and for those of us who do not refuse to be entertained, he can still be a great showman. This set has plenty of enjoyment value in

addition to its immeasurable historical importance.

Naturally, the recordings are bad; the guitar suffers especially. But OJL has done the best remastering job possible, and the scratchy sound will deter few listeners, as this is the only way this music can be heard today. One cannot, however, approve OJL's practice of issuing this album without notes, promising them for a "1962 OJL blues annual" for which a fee will presumably be charged.

This "Limited Edition" can be obtained for \$5.00 from the Origin Jazz Library, 39 Remsen Street (1E), Brooklyn Heights 1, New York. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

FIDDLER BEERS SINGS PSALTY PSONGS WITH  
PSALTERY AND PFIDDLE  
(Prestige International 13047)  
THE GENTLE ART OF EVELYNE BEERS  
(Prestige International 13053)

Prestige here presents its psecond and third albums pfeaturing the talents of Bob "Pfiddler" Beers and his wife, Evelyne. "Pfiddler" gives us a program of pfunny psongs, accompanying himself on the psaltery and pfiddle. Evelyne, who is more pfun to listen to than "pfiddler" because she's not always trying to be pfunny, sings a discful of love songs in a pretty concert voice. Our advice: pforget these records. They're two Beers too many.  
(Reviewer: Reynolds K. Pfarnsnits)

FRED GERLACH: TWELVE-STRING GUITAR  
(Folkways 3529)

With this reissue of an album which appeared several years ago on the short-lived Audio-Video label, Folkways has again made available one of the weirdest experiences in folk music. Gerlach, a very imaginative musician, takes songs by Leadbelly and several others, and carefully and lovingly works them over into his highly eccentric style. He weaves all sorts of counterfigures in and out of the original guitar accompaniments. Sometimes the tree gets lost in all the leaves, and sometimes Gerlach trips over his fingers (GALLOW'S POLE), but there is much to be savored in his guitar work.

Gerlach's singing, however, may come as a shock. He has an unbelievable delivery right out of vaudeville, via Al Jolson. He bleeds every oozing drop of pathos out of these unfortunate songs, and his air of childish innocence (LITTLE GIRL) may make you wince. His FANNIN STREET is a nightmare. SAMSON, learned from the Reverend Gary Davis, is equally horrible. He seems to do it all with great sincerity: one can only conclude that he actually considers the style appropriate for these songs. One doesn't quite know whether to laugh or cry.

A transcription has been added to the original notes: with the current interest in 12-strings (how things have changed

(continued on page 29)

## BIG JOE WILLIAMS IS NOT THE BLUES

...But Big Joe Williams IS  
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### PINEY WOODS BLUES Delmar LP DL-602

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## LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

\*\*\*\*\*

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(continued from page 26)  
since those notes were written!), this attractively packaged set should do quite well. There is still a lot to be done for the 12-string on records, however: no records exist of Mike Russo, who captures the spirit of Leadbelly much more than does Gerlach, and also plays more cleanly; or of Dave Ray, who is just about as inventive as Gerlach and is a brilliant young singer. Either of them seem easily capable of making a better LP than this one.  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JIMMY REED AT CARNEGIE HALL  
(Vee-Jay 1035) A 2-LP set.

With John Lee Hooker now making it big as a folk blues artist, Vee-Jay here attempts to introduce another of their performers to the same white intellectual audience by dangling the Carnegie Hall name-tag in front of them. The fact is that none of the songs here were actually recorded at the concert, but are rather "stunningly accurate recreations of the program...a few days later.. under ideal studio conditions." Second, only one of the LP's is from this program. The other is a collection of singles called THE BEST OF JIMMY REED. Don't let these disappointments get you down, however: the music is good.

Jimmy Reed's style is contemporary rather than traditional. It is based on the workings of the older blues in much the same way

that bluegrass is an outgrowth of white Southern Mountain music. Reed plays guitar and harmonica simultaneously (a modern Memphis Willie B), and is usually backed with drums and a second guitar, both guitars being electrified. He gets a repetitious but extremely infectious beat that keeps his music moving and danceable at all times (almost any one of Reed's 25-odd singles uses the same catchy bass figure, but you never tire of it). His style is not that of a Delta musician (as the liner notes try to claim), but rather more of a modified country-city sound: sort of easy, lazy "Chicago" blues. His voice is slow and drawling; his harp imaginative and insistent; his music simple and rhythmic, with a wonderful sensuousness.

The Carnegie LP contains the poorer tunes (although BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY, FOUND JOY, and, especially, the instrumental, BLUE CARNEGIE, are interesting), and THE BEST OF JIMMY REED the earlier, rougher numbers. Pete Welding's liner notes claim that these are re-recordings of Reed's earlier hits ("they approximate the power and drive of the originals, several of which were made seven or eight years ago..they do vividly point out..his approach has considerably deepened and matured over the years"). It is small wonder that they "approximate the power.. of the originals" since they are, in fact, the originals. One wonders why anyone would try to claim otherwise since these

sides (YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO, HONEST I DO, AIN'T THAT LOVING YOU BABY, BOOGIE IN THE DARK, etc.) represent the best of Reed's work: the harp is more in evidence, the lyrics more meaningful (although Jimmy is certainly no Lightnin' Hopkins), and the approach more fiery and emotional than on his current performances.

Perhaps this set will not gain anywhere near the recognition from the folk audience that John Lee Hooker's records have, but, nonetheless, anyone seriously interested in blues should certainly be aware of the music of Jimmy Reed.

(Guest reviewer: Dave Glover)

#### WOODY GUTHRIE SINGS FOLK SONGS (Folkways 2483)

Contemporary folksingers such as Jack Elliott and Bob Dylan have, by their very presence on today's folk music scene, elevated Woody Guthrie, one of our truly great songwriters and folksingers, from out of the ranks of folk musician to a far, far loftier (and probably equally correct) position as an authentic American folk hero. For Woody, like Jesse James or Railroad Bill, has come to stand for far more than his accomplishments as a man (which are considerable): singers like Dylan and Elliott have come to attempt to wear not only the musical contributions, but also the actual speech, syntax, clothing, and inner personality of their idol. Guthrie,



the dusty-footed Odysseus of U. S. "hard times", has gained a stature among the young folksingers that represents far more than mere respect or admiration.

Now, Moses Asch has given us a chance to judge for ourselves with another album of choice Guthrie material, sung and played by Woody himself. Most of the songs on this superb disc were recorded circa 1944 and have not previously been released on LP. Several, in fact, have never been available even as 78rpm's. There are some magnificent new (to LP) songs written by Guthrie (DIRTY OVERALLS, JACK HAMMER BLUES, and a fine tongue-in-cheek OREGON TRAIL), songs from old records (WHAT DID THE DEEP SEA SAY?, WILL YOU MISS ME?, and a great jaw-busting SPRINGFIELD MOUNTAIN), a wonderful guitar solo (GUITAR BLUES), and some old favorites (HARD TRAVELING, HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN, JOHN HENRY, WE SHALL BE FREE, THOSE BROWN EYES, BOLL WEEVIL BLUES, and, on the fiddle, NINE HUNDRED MILES). Sonny Terry, Cisco Houston, Leadbelly, and Bess Hawes join Woody on several of the songs. Some of the material is repeated from Stinson. However, most of the cuts represent alternate takes, and, in some cases, whole new arrangements. An example of this is the great HARD TRAVELING heard here, with Sonny Terry on harp, Woody on mandolin, and Cisco on guitar. The new material and the stirring performances of all the songs make this record one of the most important

of all Folkways releases. Let us hope Asch's documentation of a true American folk legend will continue, and, in the future, include such songs as 1913 MASSACRE, LUDLOW MASSACRE, RAMBLIN' BLUES, UNION BURYING GROUND, MY NEW FOUND LAND, NEW YORK TOWN, and the many others as yet unreleased on modern LP.

\* \* \* \* LETTER TO THE EDITORS \* \* \* \*

A QUESTION THAT NEEDS AN ANSWER.....

Dear Paul and Jon: In issue #5 you devoted the entire mag to Woody Guthrie, his songs, life, records, etc. On page 28, you mention that an individual may order an hour of recording tape of Guthrie's songs from the Library of Congress. I wrote the Library and received the reply that the songs may not be recorded without the written permission of the Guthrie Children's Trust Fund and one Mr. Harold Leventhal. I wrote to Leventhal and received a NO. What I would like to know is where did you get your information? This whole thing gripes the hell out of me. I thought the Library of Congress belonged to the American people and NO other group. Pretty soon we'll have Funds for Pete Steele, Mrs. Texas Gladden, Sailor Dad Hunt, and all the rest of the Gang. Leventhal talks about supporting Woody, giving programs featuring Woody's songs, buying his song books, records, etc., and yet he turns right around and

(continued on page 36)

(FOLK FESTIVAL, continued from page 12)  
and the Carolina Tar Heels.

Jean and Edna Ritchie did a few songs together before Jean did some of her beautiful solos (GUIDE ME OH JEHOVAH, GOIN' TO BOSTON, NOTTAMUN TOWN). The two sisters sang some lovely Ritchie family duets (COME ALL YE FAIR AND TENDER LADIES, SARO, WHERE ARE YOU GOING MY PRETTY FAIR MISS) in a manner that completely charmed everyone. Jean is a really great traditional singer, and it was a real pity that she could only be present for the final night of the Festival. Tom Ashley and his gang joined Jean and Edna for an incredibly moving performance of AMAZING GRACE to round off the first half of Sunday night's concert.

The Ramblers came on for their second appearance of the Festival and did a snappy OLD JOE CLARK with two banjos and a fiddle. John did BILL MORGAN'S GAL, Mike did CARTER'S BLUES, and Tom did his famous RAILROAD BLUES. WAVE ON THE SEA and a rousing ONE LITTLE STORY THAT THE CROW TOLD ME closed out their part of the program. They were fine, as usual.

Guest artist Jean Redpath (who came to the Festival merely as a spectator, but was later talked into singing) sang some Scottish songs (YARROW, NICKIE TAMS, WEE TOWN CLERK) in a totally delightful and sparkling style. She proved herself to be a first-rate artist of major importance, and we eagerly await her Prestige and Elektra albums. Her SONG OF THE SEALS

was one of the finest things of the Festival.

The Staple Singers, led by Roebuck's throbbing electric guitar, finished the Festival in properly climactic fashion, bringing down the house with some rousing gospel numbers.

As we stood talking in the hallway after the concert, we saw Jack Elliott walk by, surrounded by four or five admirers all wearing black cowboy hats like his. We heard Wedgely Todd yell, "Will the real Jack Elliott please stand up?" Jack turned around, waved, and smiled. Another Chicago Folk Festival was over. We can hardly wait until the next one. It'll probably be bigger and better than ever.

THE EDITORS.

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The Florence, Alabama, Jaycees are planning to host an old-time folk and country music contest under the title of Southeastern Championship. Contest will be held June 2-4. Cash prizes will be awarded. For details, contact Jerry C. McGee, Florence Junior Chamber of Commerce, P. O. Box 31, Florence, Alabama. Everyone welcome.

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(EDITORS' COLUMN, continued from page 2)  
Who said it? Why, Wedgely Todd, of course. And add this one by Joe Drochetz: "Everything you hear in folk music today comes from old records from the '20's and '30's." And, you know what? They're right ... Be

sure to get on the free mailing list for Bob Koester's BLUES NEWS. Write 439 S. Wabash, Chicago 5, and ask for your sample copy. Koester acts as agent for just about every blues great now living in Chicago. Ask for a list ... Last week we had the rare pleasure of hearing Jesse Fuller in concert and talking with him a great deal in private conversation. Jesse is now traveling through the Midwest heading for the East Coast. We have never used our name in an attempt to get bookings for any artist before, but Jesse gave just about the greatest concert we have ever witnessed, and we feel he needs to be heard by everyone. Write Jesse Fuller, 1679 11th St., Oakland, California, and the mail will be forwarded to him ... See you next month.

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(LETTER, continued from page 33)  
rations, the material that is available and lets Woody's fans get only what he (Mr. L) wants them to get. I don't get it. Of course, I suppose that Leventhal doesn't get his full share of the markup on the Library of Congress records. Sincerely,

JOHN GROSS  
Milwaukee, Wisc.

Editors' Note: We tried the same thing reader Gross did, and met with pretty much the same results. Mr. L said he'd let us know later. That was a year-and-a-half ago. Other friends have received a straight NO. We'd like an answer as to "why", too.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER  
(\*denotes LP's to be reviewed in LSR)

\*The Origin Jazz Library will soon release OJL-4, THE JUG BANDS, and OJL-5, SAM COLLINS.

\*I HAVE TO PAINT MY FACE (Arhoolie 1005)  
Various blues artists.

\*LOWELL FULSON (Arhoolie 2003) Mostly reissues from the Swing Time label.

\*MERCY DEE WALTON (Arhoolie 1007)

\*LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS (Arhoolie 1011) To be released by June, 1962.

\*Joe Turner and Pete Johnson's Orchestra; JUMPIN' THE BLUES (Arhoolie 2004) To be released by June, 1962.

\*WHISTLING ALEX MOORE (Arhoolie 1008) For information on Arhoolie Records, write to: International Blues Record Club, P. O. Box 671, Los Gatos, California.

THE LINCOLNS (Kapp) Folkum.

\*DAVE GUARD AND THE WHISKEYHILL SINGERS (Capitol 1728) Weak and disappointing.

THE BEST OF THE KINGSTON TRIO (Capitol)

THE BROTHERS FOUR GREATEST HITS (Columbia 1803) Junk.

JIMMIE DRIFTWOOD AT SEA (RCA-Victor 2443)

THE TRAVELERS 3 (Elektra)

Robbinsdale Choir: FOLKSONG U.S.A. (Audio Fidelity 1965) Choral folkum.

BOB GROSSMAN (Elektra)

Oscar Brand: ROLLICKING SEA SHANTIES (Audio Fidelity 1966)

The Tarriers have signed with Decca.

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS ON STAGE (Imperial)

Harry Belafonte: THE MIDNIGHT SPECIAL (RCA-Victor 2449) Belaphoney and his cast of thousands ride again. This time there is even a little order blank inside the LP informing the listener that, for a mere \$2.00, he can get a full set of lyrics for the songs on the album. For \$5.00, Harry'd probably sell his grandmother.

Lightnin' Hopkins: FAST LIFE WOMAN (Verve 8453) Looks like a reissue of Lightnin's Dart album.

\*Jesse Fuller, our favorite, will soon have a third album out on Good Time Jazz. Jesse has also been recorded by Prestige Bluesville.

\*The Stanley Brothers: OLD TIME CAMP MEETING (King 750) The finest professional country group in an LP of religious songs.

\*MORE BANJO IN THE HILLS (Starday 169) The Stanley Brothers, Flatt and Scruggs, Bill Clifton, many more.

\*TRADITIONAL SONGS OF ONTARIO (Prestige International Documentary 25014) Collected by Edith Fowke.

\*BLUEGRASS HALL OF FAME (Starday 181) Anthology of various bluegrass greats.

THE CITIZENS SING ABOUT A CITY OF PEOPLE (Laurie) Modern folksongs about cities.

Mama Yancey and Little Brother Montgomery: SOUTH SIDE BLUES (Riverside 403)

\*TRADITIONAL MUSIC FROM GRAYSON AND CARROLL COUNTIES (Folkways 3811) Field recordings featuring Wade Ward, others.

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POETRY ROOM

**ON OUR COVER...** double cover, that is, this month are Roscoe Holcomb, traditional singer from Daisy, Kentucky, and Moses Asch, owner and guiding light of Folkways Records. Holcomb is just about our favorite traditional singer, and Asch is, of course, a national hero to all folk record buyers everywhere. The double cover is for Izzy Young's benefit: he can now display our colorful holiday issue under two titles -- **THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW** or (to use his term) **THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW CONFIDENTIAL**. Anything to please the genial proprietor of the Folklore Center. Both drawing and caricature are by Barbara Rauhala.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

BY JON PARKAKE & PAUL NELSON

Since Henry Luce did us a favor by mentioning us in *TIME*, the least we can do is return the favor here: read *TIME*, everybody. Since the infamous article appeared a few weeks ago, we've been swamped with letters (read: we got two) demanding to know why we want Joan Baez to take voice lessons. All  
(continued on page 27)

Readers whose subscriptions run out with this issue will find an "X" marked in the box to the lower right. Three dollars will bring you 12 more nifty issues. LSR, 3220 Park Av. S., Mpls. 7.

### \*\*\* RECORD REVIEWS \*\*\*

**FURRY LEWIS: BACK ON MY FEET AGAIN** (Prestige Bluesville 1036) and **DONE CHANGED MY MIND** (Prestige Bluesville 1037)

Here, at last, is the long-awaited Furry Lewis "musical documentary," now issued as two separate LP's. The venerable singer-guitarist, whose **KASSIE JONES** is a high point of the Folkways Anthology, performs a carefully-chosen program of twenty songs, with three standard ballads (**JOHN HENRY** on #1036, **CASEY JONES** and **FRANKIE AND JOHNNY** on #1037) included among many of the finest traditional country blues numbers. The two discs provide, between them, a colorful cross-section of the repertoire of one of our very finest Negro artists.

It must, in all honesty, be pointed out that Furry is not quite the performer he used to be. His singing is still moving, his guitar tone often beautiful, but the fire has gone out of his once electrifying accompaniments: the notes are still there, but they are shadows of their old selves, with the bass runs now faint, the articulation often muddy.

Many listeners will therefore find these records an acute disappointment, but there is no denying that Furry is still worth a hearing: his performances speak eloquently of his great tradition, and there is an occasional flashing hint of the great

stylist he once was. And there are a few real delights, like the guitar "played like a banjo" on OLD BLUE (#1036). These discs do not, perhaps, make for intense listening enjoyment, but, as a documentary, the set is a fine production, fruitful for study and worthy of a place in any library.  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JUDY COLLINS: GOLDEN APPLES OF THE SUN  
(Elektra 222)

Judy Collins, whose craft is that of the professional popular singer with pseudo-fine art status leanings, and who utilizes, with dubious results, folk and folk-derived material in her act, here performs one of the feats of the year: a Yeats poem set to music by Richard Dyer-Bennet, a Negro spiritual, a whaling song, an American lullaby, a Polish art song, a folknik composition, a Scots ballad, an Irish ballad, and other songs are made musically indistinguishable from one another. That takes, as they say, some doing, and is not an accomplishment to be belittled. The song texts alone make TWELVE GATES TO THE CITY different from FANNERIO, and that different from LITTLE BROWN DOG.

The singer shows a tremendous amount of mechanical improvement in tremolo and vocal control over her previous efforts, investing her performances with consid-

erable previously-absent bazazz. Spell that capital B-A-E-Z. On the strength of this disc, the only improvement Miss Collins can make in the future is to perform barefooted and clad in a burlap dress.

(Editors)

ODETTA AT TOWN HALL (Vanguard 9103)

Odetta is a dignified person and a dignified and imposing performer; however, there is a point at which dignity verges on grandiosity, and Miss Felious unfortunately hovers uncomfortably close to this point all too often. The theatricality of this Town Hall performance, like that of her Carnegie Hall album, leads one to surmise that all that is left for her is to appear at the Metropolitan Opera clad in Wagnerian horned helmet and chain mail. It little matters what type of music she sings, for her monstrous stage image pounds her material into whimpering insignificance. ODETTA AT TOWN HALL contains few songs she has not already recorded elsewhere, and is musically redundant as well. Odetta fans may want to buy it for the applause.

(Editors)

EXCITING NEW LSR CONTEST: PICK THE NEXT "FOLK" HAT TO WIN ACCLAIM IN NEW YORK CITY! ALL ENTRIES LISTING HUCK FINN CAPS AND BLACK COWBOY HATS WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.



LOGAN ENGLISH: AMERICAN FOLK BALLADS  
(Monitor 388)

A welcome back for Logan, who, as a soloist, has been silent on records for many years. He returns with a relaxed and old-fashioned collection that is commendably mindful of the old Stinson Folksay jam sessions. Here, performed with occasional and very informal group vocals and instrumental backing, are tried-and-true songs such as Woody Guthrie's ROLL ON COLUMBIA and TALKING FISHING BLUES, SHENANDOAH, T FOR TEXAS, IN THE JAILHOUSE NOW, and MY LAST OLD DOLLAR IS GONE -- as well as such English standards as BUCKEYE JIM, SUGAR HILL, and LITTLE BROWN DOG. Logan stoutly refuses to either commercialize or ethnicize his songs, and his smooth-but-homely voice, straightforward delivery, and choice of songs resemble closely the performances of the late Cisco Houston. And Logan yodels at least as well as (and possibly better than) Cisco did. For fans who are uninterested in folkum, but as yet find field singers and their city disciples too difficult or exotic, this is the new record to have.  
(Editors)

THE JANUARY ISSUE OF HIGH FIDELITY HAS  
A LONG ARTICLE ON PETE SEEGER.

THE FIRST FIVE FROM FOLK-LEGACY ...

Sandy Paton has said of Folk-Legacy, his newly-formed record company: "...We will devote ourselves almost entirely to truly traditional artists...we can afford only a handful of records each year but we are determined that every one of them will be an important contribution to the field of recorded folk music." In his F-L catalog, he further states: "Folk-Legacy Records... is a young company dedicated to the traditional music and lore of the English-speaking world...We are determined that each record...be a significant contribution..." Strong words, and promises with muscle in them; yet, in this country, at least, just the precious commodity that is generally roundly ignored and held in disfavor because it is "serious" (one can almost imagine, in Madison Avenue terms, a new slogan for F-L: The Chosen Few Like The First Five); few other companies (only Folk-Lyric, Origin Jazz Library, Arkhoolie, and Delmar that we can think of, although Folkways certainly need not hang its head) could make such statements without blushing behind Pete Seeger or Tossie Aaron albums. Paton can, and his honesty and fortitude need blush to no man (may his rewards equal his integrity!); now, with the emergence of the "First Five," we can evaluate and, happily, enjoy his superlative collective results. We find he has more than lived up to his credo.

If one were to discuss, metaphorically, the three albums in Paton's FSA Series in terms of the visual arts of painting and movies (speaking not of stature or importance, but only of style and over-all general impression), one would logically begin by calling Frank Proffitt (FRANK PROFFITT, FSA-1) a Rembrandt or D. W. Griffith: strong, silent, utterly masterful, almost totally without flash. (Rossie Holcomb, naturally, would be Van Gogh, with the bright sun blazing over the writhing olive trees, or, cinematically, Truffaut, Welles, or Godard; Robert Smith might be Michelangelo and Bergman; Bob Dylan, Jackson Pollack and Jonas Mekas; Harry Belafonte, a combination of Norman Rockwell, Stanley Kramer, and Cecil B. DeMille.) Edna Ritchie (EDNA RITCHIE, FSA-3), or, for that matter, her sister Jean as well, could easily be Auguste Renoir, filled with the hazy lustre of a warm and bright day; filmically, she might be Jean Renoir. Abe Trivett (JOSEPH ABLE TRIVETT, FSA-2), the ruddy, 80-year-old lumberjack, would seem to exemplify all the nostalgic charm of an old, tattered black-and-white photograph, probably more representative than creative; or a Robert Flaherty. (Isn't it fun to speculate: Woody Guthrie would surely be John Ford!) Frank Proffitt, our Rembrandt-D. W. Griffith figure, does a far more impressive program on Folk-Legacy than he did

on Folkways: his voice seems much stronger, more sure; stylistically, he is much more daring, and, at the same time, much more relaxed and at ease. As always, he works in a clear-cut, unquestioned pattern of archaic blacks and browns; his palette is somber, near chiaroscuro, if you will, yet has great strength. The dark browns of his singing and playing give more power and force to the contrast of the few bright and brilliant colors he occasionally uses. Proffitt's art is not mercurial, nor does it project like Holcomb's; it is instead soft, almost receding, like the warm glow from a log-piled fireplace, or old friends talking late at night. It seems artless and homely, yet it has the sound and solidarity of the mountains in it, the quiet strength and the deep loneliness: not outwardly exciting, but beneath its calm, studied surface, quite spectacular in its emotional results. Like Griffith, Proffitt seems, indeed, a pioneer, and while his work may seem crude and rough-cut, one can also see the emerging from this hand-worn, hand-crafted art of the basis and timelessness of all Appalachian folk music; it is as true to say of Proffitt as it is of Griffith: nothing new has really been added since his time.

Proffitt accompanies himself on one of his home-made fretless banjos for most of the songs on this album, but sings one or two unaccompanied. Such traditional standards as CLUCK OLD HEN, WILD HILL

JONES, GYPS OF DAVID, SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN, and HANDSOME MOLLY are given excellent treatment, but our own favorites are the songs that Proffitt himself had a hand in making: TRIFLING WOMAN, I'LL NEVER GET DRUNK NO MORE, and GOING ACROSS THE MOUNTAIN; stylistically, both vocally and instrumentally, they show him in his best light and most relaxed form. FRANK PROFFITT is strongly recommended; this album has the charm of a favorite book that one takes out again and again to re-read, and spotlights Proffitt at his expressive and artistic best.

Edna Ritchie, like Jean, performs unaccompanied and with a dulcimer in a style, like our Renoir examples, full of natural warmth and humanistic simplicity; child-like, but not childish. While Edna may not quite be the conscious artist that her sister Jean is, she is a formidable traditional singer, and her performances are alive with the spirit of the Cumberland; here is a gentle magic, softly veiled in reminiscence. As D. K. Wilgus states in his liner notes: "Edna is not a conscious traditionalist who deliberately seeks out the 'old ways' of singing...The turns and graces...are natural survivals in spite of experience and influences, not attempts at authenticity." While Edna sings many familiar Ritchie family songs (FAIR AND TENDER LADIES, JACKARD, etc.), she also does several which Jean has never recorded; in

addition, we get the added bonus of hearing a large part of the famous Ritchie canon of song from a different element within the family -- and, since Wilgus calls the Ritchies "the best known singing family in the United States," this is important. Anyone who has learned to appreciate the artistry of Jean Ritchie will find Edna Ritchie's first album equally rewarding.

Of Abe Trivett (who, incidentally, has the distinction of being born in a log cabin which was half in North Carolina and half in Tennessee), Sandy Paton says: "(he) may not be a great singer, but in his rough voice and bold...style, one can hear many things -- long, hard days spent felling timber... 'ballhooting' logs down snow-covered slopes...working from dawn till dark with wet trousers frozen solid...years of hard labor...and, especially, the nights in the logging camps where men made music and told tales...There was nothing pretty or fancy in...these men and their music was cut from the same homespun cloth. If it is the artist's genius to be able to express, accurately, the culture in which he lives, then Abe Trivett is an artist." Surely as apt and perceptive a critique on JOSEPH ABLE TRIVETT as we would be able to write; we might, however, add that Trivett's artistry is more photographic in nature than either Proffitt's or Ritchie's: the stark, often harsh blacks and grays of the lumber worker's sub-world of hard labor are beautifully rendered, as are the tender, teary streaks of blunt sentimentality that often find their

way into these songs. Paton has provided us here with an exceptional documentary recording. (For a listing of Trivett's songs, see Folk-Legacy's ad on page 20 of LSR #24.)

While it is certainly no news to folk scholars that the folk tale is every bit as plentiful among field informants as the folk song, it may come as a bit of a shock to most folk record fans, since, until RICHARD CHASE TELLS THREE "JACK" TALES FROM THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS (FTA-1), there had not been a single LP devoted to the folk tale. (Tradition included a few jokes by Chase in an early album of theirs, but no tales.) Now, Paton has corrected this glaring and important omission by giving us "America's Hans Christian Anderson" telling three delightful "Jack" tales to an enraptured audience of mountain children. The presence of a "live" audience instead of just a cold microphone was an inspired touch since it obviously serves as quite an inspiration and challenge to Mr. Chase, and leads him to high-spirited performances of JACK AND THE ROBBERS, JACK AND THE KING'S GIRL, and JACK AND THE THREE SILLIES. Very important from a scholastic point-of-view, this LP is also marvelous fun, and is an absolute necessity to fill in the gap in any qualified collection of Southern Mountain folklore.

FLeming BROWN (FSI-1), the first disc in Paton's urban "Interpreters Series," must be counted, if not wholly "important," as

a fine first representation of a promising citybilly performer. Brown, who has served as an accompanist for Jean Ritchie (his banjo has that "down home" sound, Jean says), has been heard briefly on Folkways, but this is his first solo album. He sings and plays his way through an ambitious program of Southern Mountain songs immortalized by the likes of Doc Boggs, Rufus Crisp, and Molly Jackson (ELLEN SMITH, PEARL BRYAN, THE CUCKOO, SUGAR HILL, etc.); a suicidal undertaking to a lesser performer, but Brown comes out of it with honors, ranking, with this LP, among the handful of worthwhile urban folk artists who passionately proclaim folk style as their Bible. Happily, he has also learned to control his once-excessive intensity, and now stands as a mature performer well worth hearing. A fine debut. (Editors)

THE GREAT JUG BANDS: JUGS 1927-1933!  
(Origin Jazz Library 4)

Horses of many different colors run loose in this album, the common denominator being the use by all of a jug, which (blown like a Coke bottle) produces a rich, booming sound, able to take the bass part in just about any kind of old-time blues or jazz music. About half the selections in this set are out-and-out blues; represented, among others, are Memphis Minnie, Jack Kelly's South Memphis Jug Band, and Hoah Lewis (with Sleepy John Estes and Yank

Rachel). The rest of the set has some real old-time jazz, along with some of what was later to be called "novelty hot dance" music, a quaint JUG BAND WALTZ, and one piece of Sanctified Singing (with jug, of course).

The blues selections cover a wide range of styles, from those resembling the accompaniments used by the theatre blues singers like Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, to some (Memphis Minnie) which seem to anticipate the tradition of blues combo playing which has flourished since the late 1930's. All these are notable for being the earliest recorded examples of combo country blues.

The other selections share a constantly infectious state of high spirits. If played widely enough, this album could start a regular jug band fad (which wouldn't be the worst thing that ever happened to folk music). This set, with Gus Cannon, the Memphis and Birmingham Jug Bands, etc., fills most comfortably a gaping hiatus in American folk music documentation, and Origin's usual top-notch processing is enhanced, at long last, by adequate notes.

THE GREAT JUG BANDS can be obtained for \$5.00 from the Origin Jazz Library, 39 Remsen Street (1E), Brooklyn Heights 1, New York.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

WHY NOT SUBSCRIBE TO LSR RIGHT NOW!?!?!?

### SOUTHERN FIELD AND STRING-BAND LP'S ...

Although THE MUSIC OF ROSCOE HOLCOMB AND WADE WARD (Folkways 2363) is theoretically a 50-50 proposition, it is, for all practical purposes, Holcomb's album, and it is unfortunate and a bit unfair that the charming and graceful banjo and fiddle solos of Ward will inevitably be known as "the other side of the Holcomb record."

Holcomb, the singer-banjoist-guitarist from Daisy, Kentucky, first recorded by John Cohen for his MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY (Folkways 2317), is a monumental performer, one whose very intensity and complexity demands, even commands, singular and undivided attention from a listener; his intensity overpowers, if not outclasses, Ward's gentler offerings.

Holcomb's music contains elements of some of the oldest surviving American traditions: folklorists could trace both his high, mournful singing style and many of his songs back to the musical traditions imported from the Old World. Yet he is by no means an archaic oddity, no walking nostalgic American musical heirloom. His singing is alive and immediate, his drawn voice as clear and piercing as an acid etching. Much of the excitement generated by his performances -- which stand solidly even when unaccompanied (as on the haunting MAN OF CONSTANT SORROW and MOONSHINER) -- emanates from the juxtaposition of his high, arching vocal line with banjo or

guitar accompaniment marked by racing contemporary tempi and electric, syncopated rhythms (as on TROUBLE IN MIND, with its insistently jazzy banjo syncopations). Holcomb's explosive style, combined with his remarkably hard-bitten, realistic, and unsentimental repertoire, is an artistic, even transcendental, means of communication. Songs as common as OLD SMOKEY and as fresh as TRUE LOVE (an extremely rare ballad known also as POISON IN A GLASS OF WINE) become alike unmistakable personal statements of the man's thought and feeling, and although their bitterness and sorrow may be occasionally disturbing in their intensity and nakedness, they invariably ring true and emerge as indelible emotional confrontation. The man as artist stands uncompromisingly revealed, the most moving of esthetic experiences.

Although it will require considerable subsequent study to thoroughly evaluate Holcomb's musical achievements in terms of American tradition, he has, on the basis of this recording alone, already taken his place as one of the most electrifying folk musicians ever recorded, ranking with the greats of recorded folk, hillbilly, country, and folk-oriented recordings from their inception in 1923 to the present hi-fi era. Although we will never hear again another Doc Boggs, another Buell Kazee, or another George Roarke, the fact that we have a Roscoe

Holcomb seems to be the most affirmative statement that can be made about the enduring vitality and artistic worth of our contemporary folk music. And, even more incredibly, this issue proves the worth of the modern mass communications industry by its very existence. This has to be the record of the year; "enter these enchanted woods ye who dare..."

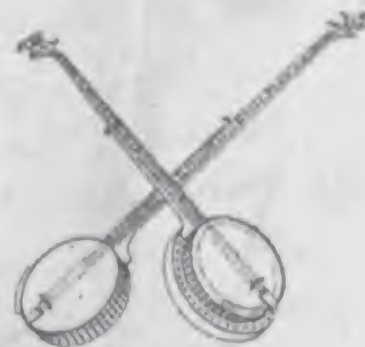
Ward, the instrumental virtuoso of southwestern Virginia, is heard in more appropriate context on TRADITIONAL MUSIC FROM GRAYSON AND CARROLL COUNTIES (Folkways 3811), a collection of the oldest remaining musical traditions of what is still one of the richest folk song areas in the United States. Collectors Eric Davidson and Paul Newman report the tradition a failing one, residing in the hands of oldsters such as Ward (69 years old), banjo-picking Vester Jones (60), and fiddler-banjoist Glen Smith (76), and apparently without hope of surviving their generation. Instrumental tradition seems to be dying harder than vocal tradition (Lomax's field trip of 1959 likewise found first-rate singers with large repertoires scarce), and to judge from the familiar titles appearing on this album, the rarer songs recorded by musicians of this area in the 1920's and '30's have long since disappeared.

This is an artistically and documentarily beautiful collection, however, and must be treasured as perhaps one of the last gatherings of pre-1900 songs and musical

styles of a fabled cultural area. The collectors admirably document their work with thoughtful socio-musicological background and research, although their approach may seem cold compared with that of such collectors as Lomax and Cohen, who stress the private and lyric characteristics of their material. Recommended as a companion album for MOUNTAIN MUSIC OF KENTUCKY, the other great album exemplifying the musical essence of a rich regional tradition.

A documentation of THE 37TH OLD-TIME FIDDLERS CONVENTION AT UNION GROVE, NORTH CAROLINA (Folkways 2434), edited by Mike Seeger and John Cohen, effectively captures the hectic flavor of the modern commercial country music contest and shindig. This collection of instrumental string-band music should not be taken to be strictly representative of country ensemble music in general, since these performances are, with few exceptions, intricate and polished virtuoso show-pieces, designed and played with an eye to impressing contest judges and audiences. The album's primary value is its illustration of the wide variety of string-band styles remaining in the South: everything from the primitive fiddling of Grandma Davis of Roaring River on MAY I SLEEP IN YOUR BARN TONIGHT, MISTER? to polished and professional blue-grass orchestras (including a couple of  
(continued on page 23)

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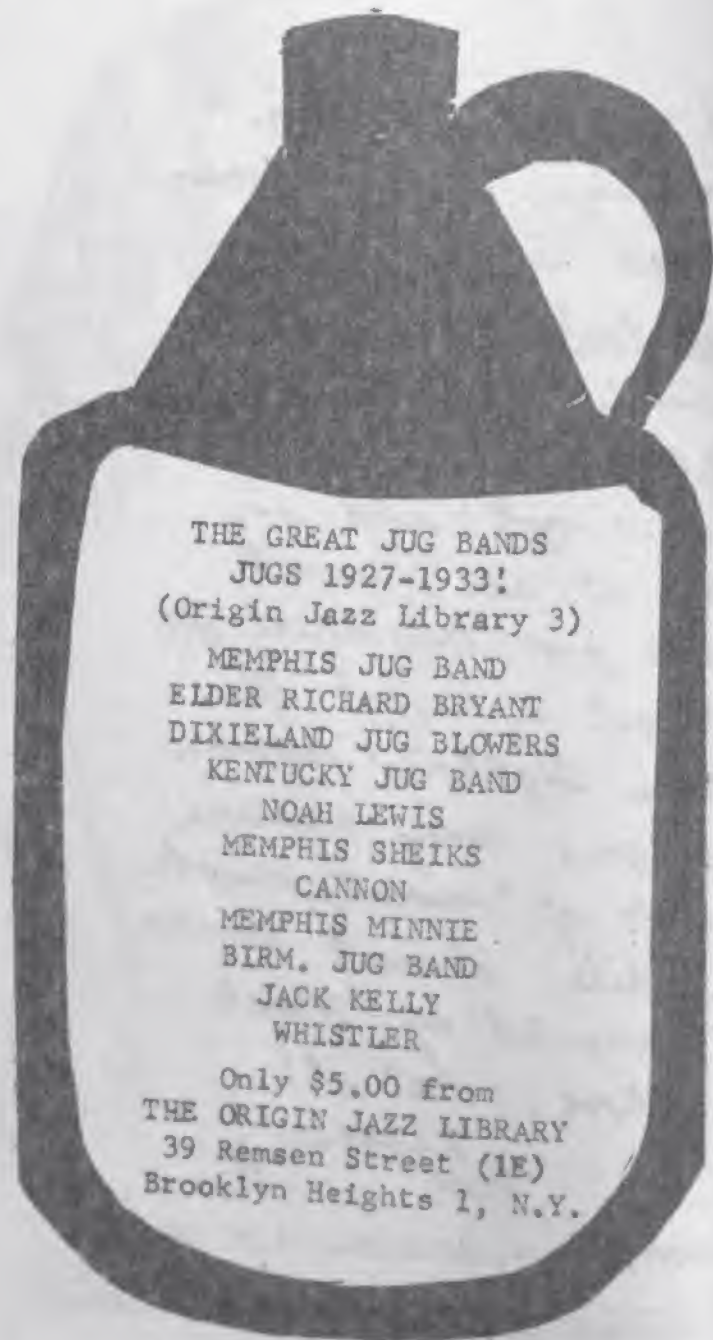
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(continued from page 18)

ringers from New York City).

Program highlight is the red-hot, blues-influenced, harmonica-dominated LOST JOHN of Red Parham's Haywood County Ramblers, performed as accompaniment to the jiggling of an old-time "buck" dancer who is "turned loose" during the show. Also heard from is Bascom Lamar Lunsford, sounding less like the Grand Old Man of the Banjo than we've ever heard him, leading the audience in singing I SHALL NOT BE MOVED. The dominance of fast-paced, largely modern instrumentals and the absence of worthwhile traditional singing make this disc one of specialized interest.

The first of the New Lost City Ramblers-inspired campus "old-timey" string-bands to be recorded, THE PHILO GLEE AND MANDOLIN SOCIETY (University of Illinois Campus, Folksong Club 101), demonstrates the merits and faults we suspect common to such groups: more energy has been devoted to attaining old-timey proficiency in instrumentation than in vocalization; the singing lags considerably behind the playing in quality throughout the program. The group's statement that its use of autoharp on nearly every number gives it an "earlier sound than other 'old-timey' groups" seems more like a desperate rationalization of a technical necessity. The autoharp is, and was, to the old-time musicians recorded in the '20's (outside of the Carter Family, the appearance of autoharp on old recordings is very

rare), a specialty or novelty instrument, incapable of providing, as it is asked to do too often by the PG&MS, adequate rhythmic support to banjo and fiddle. Despite these basic faults, the Illinois boys are worth hearing, well intentioned, and on the right track. With more contact with better source material, they show a good potential to build around Jim Hockenull's fine fiddling. (Fiddling, with the exception of singing, is the most difficult "old-time" art to master). Interested fans -- and we'd judge them to be many -- can send \$5.00 to the University of Illinois Campus Folksong Club, Champaign, Illinois.

Busy Mike Seeger offers still another album, THE LILLY BROTHERS: FOLK SONGS FROM THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS (Folkways 2433), to continue his fine editorial work of late. The Lillys, from Clear Creek, West Virginia, perform both as a guitar-mandolin duet very much in the manner of Bill and Charlie Monroe, and as sparkplugs of their own bluegrass band. The brothers are perhaps the most genuinely old-time sounding professionals in the folk and country music business, combining solid, straightforward instrumental breaks (especially Ev Lilly's mandolin fillips) with unashamedly sentimental old songs such as FORGOTTEN SOLDIER BOY ("I'm just a poor ex-soldier that's broken down and blue/I've fought out in the great World's

War for the old red, white, and blue") that others are too cynical or embarrassed to perform nowadays. Don Stover's great bluegrass banjo joins the Lillys full band efforts, as does Herb Hooven's fiddle. Special treats are Ev Lilly's vocal on BARBARA ALLEN and the Carter Family-inspired THE WAVES ON THE SEA. The full side of duets makes this disc appealing to old-time fans as well as bluegrass devotees. (Editors)

REVEREND GARY DAVIS: SAY NO TO THE DEVIL (Prestige Bluesville 1049)

The king of America's religious performers adds another jewel to his crown with his third Prestige album. A strong, fervent singer, and a guitarist without peer anywhere, Davis seems incapable of making a bad record. Even though his religious convictions place obvious limitations on the kinds of things he will perform in public, he seems to have a limitless power for bringing us wonderful new surprises within the idiom. Chief among the surprises on this disc is the fact that the Reverend does two numbers each on the twelve-string guitar (which he plays without flash, but with probably the most beautiful tone ever achieved on this instrument) and on a large, rich-toned harmonica. These last recapture the sound of the Southern religious music of sixty years ago, confirming again the Reverend's affinity for the original tradi-

tion which he has never really left despite his great advances in guitar technique.

The six-string tunes, as usual, contain lesser-known as well as familiar songs, and combine a deep, comprehensive, individual approach to the singing of each song with brilliant new guitar lines on each number. One of them, LITTLE BITTY BABY, is surely the definitive Christmas song.

SAY NO TO THE DEVIL is a superb addition to the Reverend's catalog, and a fine starting point for those who do not yet know his fabulous music.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

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#### SUBSCRIPTIONS-BACK ISSUES-AD RATES

SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER: Get a regular 12-issue subscription plus all available back issues (#5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-20) for only \$5.00. Regular \$7.50 value.

OTHERWISE: 12-issue subscription for \$3.00; 24-issue subscription for \$6.00. (Same amount for foreign subscriptions).

All available back issues are 50 cents each. One complete file of LSR's (#1-22) available for \$25.00.

AD RATES: \$25.00 per page; \$15.00 per half-page. Circulation: 550 copies.

WRITE: THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW, 3220 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis 7, Minnesota.

(EDITORS' COLUMN, continued from page 2)  
we've ever said along those lines (in LSR #18) had nothing to do with "voice lessons" per se: we simply said we'd like her to learn something about traditional style since "the nature of folk music is in its very limitations" and Joan's "undisciplined" (undisciplined in regard to traditional folk song style, not undisciplined in the classical or trained sense) singing of it far exceeds its boundries. Hence, her material is "altered," becoming something of a cross-breed of pop and art song. Good grief, folks, if there's anybody that doesn't need voice lessons, it's Joan Baez! Perhaps the writers from TIME, in their unsuccessful attempts to comprehend any of the world of folk music, could have used numerous lessons on almost anything ...  
CORRECTION DEPT.: On page 22 of this issue, we incorrectly list the number of Origin Jazz Library's THE GREAT JUG BANDS as OJL-3. The correct number of that fine record is OJL-4 ... Candid's A TREASURY OF FIELD RECORDINGS, Volume One, advertised on pages 20-21 of this issue, is simply the American issue of the British "77" album of the same name; LSR reviewed it in detail in #12, and named it CURRENT AND CHOICE in #13 ... BLUES IN MINNEAPOLIS DEPT.: Currently playing at The Break, Oak and Washington, are three of the best urban white blues singers and instrumentalists that we've yet to hear, on record or anywhere else. Thursday and Sunday nights.

"Spider" John Koerner, a Fuller-type, both Blind Boy and Jesse, holds forth on 7-string guitar, harmonica, and kazoo. Koerner writes much original material, all of it great, and, at his best, which seems to be all the time, sounds rather like Gary Davis playing the good-time blues. Koerner's style, punchy and primitive, deliberately non-smooth, is a literal joy to hear. Friday and Saturday nights, Dave "Snaker" Ray (a magnificent 12-string guitarist) and Dave "Little Sun" Glover (probably the finest urban harmonica player in the country) do everything from Leadbelly to Jimmy Reed. Ray, far superior to any of the Greenwich Village blues artists on record, can handle almost any sort of material, from deeply introspective blues to rugged chain gang hollers; Glover has played with Big Joe Williams. Though not technically a group, the three of them work wonderfully together, lining out such rousers as THEY HUNG HIM ON A CROSS, GYPSY DAVY, or work chants unaccompanied. For our money, they rank right up there with the New Lost City Ramblers and Greenbriar Boys (indeed, a regular New Lost of the blues!), and record companies are certainly missing a bet by not recording them. They're honest, rough, true, and full of life, know what they're doing and how to do it, believe in it, and have a fine time performing blues of all kinds. So will the lucky listener that gets a chance to hear them ... See you next month, folks.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER  
(\*denotes LP's to be reviewed in LSR)

- \*Memphis Slim: ALL KINDS OF BLUES  
(Prestige Bluesville 1053)
- \*Victoria Spivey with Lonnie Johnson:  
WOMAN BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1054)
- \*BAWDY BLUES (Prestige Bluesville 1055)  
Anthology of Bluesville artists.
- \*Big Joe Williams: BLUES FOR 9 STRINGS  
(Prestige Bluesville 1056)
- \*Lightnin' Hopkins: WALKIN' THIS STREET  
BY MYSELF (Prestige Bluesville 1057)
- \*BROWNIE MCGHEE AND SONNY TERRY AT THE  
SECOND FRET (Prestige Bluesville 1058)
- \*Sonny Terry: SONNY IS KING  
(Prestige Bluesville 1059)
- \*Wade Walton: SHAKE 'EM ON DOWN  
(Prestige Bluesville 1060)
- \*Lightnin' Hopkins: LIGHTNIN' AND COMPANY  
(Prestige Bluesville 1061)
- \*Lonnie Johnson: ANOTHER NIGHT TO CRY  
(Prestige Bluesville 1062)
- \*Smokey Babe: HOTTEST BRAND GOING  
(Prestige Bluesville 1063)
- \*Robert Curtis Smith: CLARKSDALE BLUES  
(Prestige Bluesville 1064)
- \*Clarence Clay and William Scott: THE NEW  
GOSPEL KEYS (Prestige Bluesville 1066)
- \*BIG JOE WILLIAMS AT FOLK CITY  
(Prestige Bluesville 1067)
- \*Pete Franklin: GUITAR PETE'S BLUES  
(Prestige Bluesville 1068)
- \*Dave Van Ronk: FOLK SINGER  
(Prestige International 13056)

- \*Ed McCurdy: LYRICA EROTICA, Volume 3  
(Prestige International 13050)
- \*Peggy Seeger: A SONG FOR YOU AND ME  
(Prestige International 13058)
- \*Isla Cameron and Lou Killen: THE WATERS  
OF TYNE (Prestige International 13059)
- \*Alf Edwards; THE ART OF THE CONCERTINA  
(Prestige International 13060)
- \*Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger: A  
LOVER'S GARLAND (Prestige  
International 13061)
- \*The Gardners: FOLK SONGS FAR AND NEAR  
(Prestige International 13062)
- \*JACK ELLIOTT AT THE SECOND FRET  
(Prestige International 13065)
- \*THE BEST OF A. L. LLOYD  
(Prestige International 13066)
- \*TRADITIONAL SONGS OF ONTARIO  
(Prestige International Documentary  
Series 25014)
- \*CAJUN FOLK MUSIC (Prestige International  
Documentary Series 25015)
- \*BERRY FIELDS OF BLAIR (Prestige  
International Documentary Series 25016)
- \*Jeannie Robertson: THE CUCKOO'S NEST  
AND OTHER SCOTTISH FOLK SONGS (Prestige  
International Documentary Series 25017)
- \*TRADITIONAL AUSTRALIAN SINGERS AND  
MUSICIANS (Prestige International  
Documentary Series 25018) From Wattle.
- \*TRADITIONAL BALLADS FROM VIRGINIA  
(Prestige International Documentary  
Series 25019) Features Horton Barker,  
others.

More listings in LSR #25.

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

(Wherein LSR receives bouquets, dodges  
brickbats, and unashamedly drops names.)

WOODY GUTHRIE ...

Dear Editors: Would you please change your  
address for Woody Guthrie...He bring Woody  
home every Sunday where he listens to his  
records, his mail, and his children!! Do  
all, enjoy reading the "Little Review" and  
want to thank you for all the nice things  
you write about Woody and his songs. He is  
now in Brooklyn State Hospital, slowly  
deteriorating but fighting hard to "stay  
around" in spite of the fact that he can  
barely stand, talk, eat, dress himself,  
etc.!! Keep singing...and thanks again...  
Best regards,

MARJORIE GUTHRIE  
Howard Beach, New York

NEWS FROM TWO FINE LADIES ...

Dear LSR: ...I sit here enjoying Seeger,  
Ritchie, Clarence Ashley, and LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW...Sincerely,

HEDY WEST

Manhattan Beach, Calif.

Dear Paul & Jon: I like you too!

RONNIE DOBSON  
Chicago, Ill.

A CHANCE TO MAKE SOME MONEY ...

Dear LSR: ...I am...reminded that Dr. Oster asked me to drop you a line asking for suggestions as to prospective student representatives in universities where there is a folk following. We can offer a student sufficient commission in taking orders for F-L Records to make it worthwhile on a part-time basis. Your help will be much appreciated. Sincerely,

EUGENE SUTHERLAND  
(for Harry Oster)  
Folk-Lyric Records  
1945 Bay St.  
Baton Rouge, La.

NARROW-MINDED DEPT. ...

Dear Sirs: ...Despite the fact that you have a very biased and narrow-minded magazine, please find enclosed \$3.00 for a year's subscription to this little periodical. Sincerely,

ALICE WILSON  
San Diego, Calif.

Editors' Note: Thanks for your little money; our narrow minds crave it.

WE WERE FRAMED, FOLKS ...

Dear Jon & Paul: Many thanks for those particularly exciting ads in LSR. In fact, I am having the Henry Thomas ad in

#19 stated and am framing it on my wall.

It won't be too long now before OJL-5, another anthology, featuring 2 sides each by Skip James, Mississippi John Hurt, Bukka (Washington) White, Kid Bailey, Barefoot Bill, Robert Wilkins, and Willie Brown.

Again, many thanks for your breathtaking ads...Best wishes,

PETE WHELAN  
Origin Jazz Library  
Brooklyn Heights, New York

P-FOR-PROTESTY ...

Dear Little Sandy: It's pretty damn safe to speak praise of the traditional -- the junk has been long weeded out, and the pure gold of many generations remains with Frank Proffitt and Jean Ritchie and Jean Redpath, and I do love them all. But those that today have the guts to speak what's on their minds in the best way they know how -- in song -- as other people do in lectures and newspaper editorials -- they get the blanket wet-blanket from you under P-for-Protesty; an uncritical deaf ear. There is lots of poor topical song being written these days, and I've writ some of it. But some topical songs are good, and some was written by Woody Guthrie, some by Leadbelly, and some by those, whoever they are or were, who wrote GREENLAND FISHERIES, THE RANGE OF THE BUFFALO, WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?, EVERY NIGHT WHEN THE SUN GOES IN, DANGER WATER, and lots more. If I ever get to be, for a song or

two of mine, named among these, I'll be proud. And do call me M-for-Malcontent.

Enclosed find \$3 for my sub renewal. And if you and I are here to read the next issue, let's thank the Protesters I stood with today in the City Hall Plaza.

Cordially yours,

MALVINA REYNOLDS  
Berkeley, Calif.

Editors' Note: You'd be surprised at the trouble we get into by praising the traditional! It's about as safe as jumping out of a plane without a parachute.

#### JACK GAUVITTE REVISITED ...

Dear Ed.'s: ...That letter from Sandy Paton in the last LSR was really a fine one, and...worth the price of admission. And that letter from Jack Gauvitte... well...it should be set to music and performed by a large choral group. Keep up the good work. LSR is indispensable. Sincerely,

CAROLINE McDOUGAL  
New York, New York

Dear Jon & Paul: In #22 of LSR, some obvious idiot whose initials are Jack Gauvitte wrote you a letter saying, in effect, that he thought LSR was a rotten magazine because it gave your opinions on the material it reviewed. He also condemns you for not praising the Kingston Trio, the Norman Luboff Choir, or

any of these good (?) folk music groups. Mr. Gauvitte gives the excuse that without these groups, folk music would not have been introduced to the general public. Well, dear Mr. Gauvitte, if you consider the Limelitters folksingers, why the hell are you reading LSR? No person who is even slightly interested in folk music would have written as foolish a letter as you did, condemning someone's opinion on certain recordings.

I believe that the policy of LSR is to present its honest opinion of what's on the market, recordwise...To all the followers of Mr. Gauvitte: don't buy the next issue of LSR; you'll only be buying a magazine that will insult you. Also, Mr. Gauvitte, turn down your hi-fi. The garbage coming out of it is making me sick.

FRED HEILBRUN  
Skokie, Ill.

Editors' Note: Thanks for the inspired votes of confidence, Caroline and Fred. We, like you, feel that folk music -- which, after all, has been around for centuries; ever since there have been folk -- would somehow have been "discovered" without the aid of the Kingston Trio or the Limelitters. Also, we've never yet been able to figure out how to review a record without giving our opinion of it. Be sure to read our contribution to SING OUT!'s Feb.-March record column, where we discuss the problem of commercialization to some extent.

A WORD FROM MR. PROFFITT ...

Dear Editors: I was surprised but very pleased to have been chosen for the cover of LSR. Sent to me by Frank Warner.

Also the kind comments made of me and my recording make me feel very humble and grateful, indeed.

It is to friends like Frank Warner of New York and to Sandy Paton and Lee Haggerty of Folk-Legacy Records that I owe much for encouragement in singing and making of instruments to play myself and offer to others.

My knowledge of what goes on in folk music is very limited.

But I feel standards should be set in order that the authentic and traditional might endure among the other "so called" folk music (?) that is becoming prevalent of late.

I was impressed very much by a Jack Gauvitte in his Editors Letter where in he was allowing his subscription to expire because not enough credit was being given to singers like the Kingston Trio for their "contributions" to folk music. My experience has been that all who contribute to this cause because of the love of it always give the true source of material used. Since they did not do this in the Tom Dooley Song that soared them to great heights, I can't quite accept them as highly as I have others. They did, however, come and place a

wreath on Tom Dooley's grave in a crowded ceremony making much headlines. One must not forget that. And I want to say I keep hoping those boys will order a banjo or dulcimer from me giving me some money to jingle in my overall pockets too.

I think maybe you best let me have Jack Gauvitte's subscription. I need something to read when snow closes the gap in the mountains this winter. \$3.00 enclosed (Yankee Money). Sincerely,

FRANK PROFFITT  
Reese, N. C.

JUST CALL US MOE ...

Dear Paul & Jon: ...Although I only met you briefly last February in Chicago, I still should have gotten a few sentences out regarding my admiration for LSR. You're the Moé Asches of the "reviewing" field... I'll forget about the times you make me madder'n Hell -- not the point of view but the warlike syntax...I'm trying to finish the Ashley VOL. II notes...(but)...I fear the album will be issued without them...A Doc Watson & Family album is all but ready; meanwhile Doc is playing at Gerde's Folk City for two weeks...After that the whole band (Ashley, Howard, Price, etc.) will appear on Pete's Carnegie Xmas concert. Best of the season to you both,

RALPH RINZLER  
New York, New York



## LSR TO THE SOUTH POLE ...

Dear Sirs: While stateside I heard reference to your publication in regard to folk music... (Could you send me a sample copy?)

I am presently enroute (to) Antarctica to engage in "Operation Deepfreeze" and have no means of contact with the music presently happening. Respectfully,

L. ANTON SAGER  
U.S.C.G.C.

Somewhere in the Pacific

Editors' Note: In the past, we've heated up several people, but this seems to be the supreme test.

## THE MAGIC OF THEIR SINGING ...

Dear LSR: ...I didn't see the Limelinters when they were here but I talked to several who did. They were all disgusted... "Raw" ... "Vulgar" ... "Obscene" ... Dr. Gottlieb's much-touted cerebral, egg-head humor seems to have been typified by a song about a girl with a dress cut so low in the back it reveals reverse cleavage, and by stepping center stage periodically and shouting at the top of his voice, GOD DAMN!... (Saw) Jack Paar this past week... Peter, Paul and Mary were indescribably disgusting... C. F. Martin's FOLK MUSIC GUIDE... is aimed at the fad fan... FOLK MUSIC USA (another new book) is also fad fan fodder...

JAY SMITH  
Jacksonville, Florida

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

FRANK PROFFITT SINGS FOLK SONGS  
(Folkways 2360)

An album as honest, solid, simple, homely, and lasting as one of Proffitt's hand-crafted banjos.

BLIND WILLIE McTELL: LAST SESSION  
(Prestige Bluesville 1040)

Somewhat disappointing, but memorable.

TOM PALEY, ERIC WEISSBERG, MARSHALL BRICKMAN, ART ROSENBAUM: FOLK BANJO STYLES (Elektra 217)

Fine city banjo record. Paley and Rosenbaum shine especially bright.

BOB DYLAN (Columbia 1779)

Superb songwriter, daring stylist; Dylan could be the next great one.

MISSISSIPPI'S BIG JOE WILLIAMS AND HIS NINE-STRING GUITAR (Folkways 3820)

The next blues legend in a good LP, but get the Delmar and Arhoolie first.

JEAN REDPATH'S SCOTTISH BALLAD BOOK  
(Elektra 214)

All that is best in the folk song revival: beautiful.

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS, Volume Four  
(Folkways 2399)

Still the best group in the country.

ROOSEVELT SYKES: BLUES (Folkways 3827)  
Sykes' best representation on discs.

# ANNOUNCING

**FSI-1 — FLEMING BROWN**



The first of our "interpreters series." Fleming Brown is an urban singer who has listened to and learned well from many fine traditional singers. His banjo artistry is unexcelled and has what Jean Ritchie calls "a real down-home sound." This is the first solo album of a truly exciting young performer. Recorded by Norm Pellegrini at WFMT in Chicago. Includes: REEK AND RAMBLING-BLADE, MARKET SQUARE, FORD MACHINE, THE CUCKOO, AS I GO RAMBLING ROUND, ELLEN SMITH, PEARL BRYAN, ROCKY HILL, ELY BRANCH, etc. Booklet contains full texts and notes on the songs. Price—\$4.98.

**FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.**

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THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

Vol. 2 no. 1



ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS IN LOS ANGELES

38 POETRY ROOM

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# LSR

*the little sandy review*

*Published several times yearly at 525 1/2 Grand Blvd.  
Venice, California 90291  
BARRY HANSEN, editor and publisher  
Vol. 2, No. 1 (July 1966)  
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ISR is a compendium of record reviews and articles, dealing mainly with traditional American folk music, but also exploring other idioms likely to be of interest to devotees of this music.

ISR is ....! That is in itself a momentous statement. It is with no slight trepidation that we mount this platform, which in former years was used for some of the most momentous words in the entire field of musical criticism. We can only hope that the new LSR maintains the respect that was given the old one by friends and enemies alike.

The old LSR was sometimes criticized for being overly critical — for including an abundance of "bad" reviews and relatively few "good" ones. The editors knew very well what they were doing. With their very first issue they set out on the heroic task of massively reforming the folk-music taste of America — or at least that small portion of America that cared to have its taste reformed. The editors led their audience in a single direction — toward the knowledge and appreciation of authentic traditional folk music. This music had few real friends indeed when LSR started. I believe that it is a measure of LSR's success that the music had a great many friends when LSR passed from the scene last year.

The new LSR will be no carbon copy of the old one. Though we'll keep the promise we made in those dittoed promo sheets (about being full of Acrid Alacrity and so forth) there's no denying that the proportion of "good" reviews will be quite a bit higher in this magazine. We can be considerably more optimistic about the future of traditional folk music than the old LSR could be.

For this opportunity for optimism we have quite a few people to thank. Record companies. College courses. College folksong clubs. Coffeehouses. Rock & roll groups. Boston's BROADSIDE. SING OUT!. All of these contributed to a trend we like to think the old LSR played a part in starting. →

Cover photo by Marina Bokelman \$\$\$

FRM

→ What we're saying is that we no longer have to spend half the magazine on a soapbox, exhorting "Traditional Folk Music! Hear! Hear!" and the other half yelling "Commercial Folk Music! Burn! Burn!". Everybody who reads this already realizes that Roscoe Holcomb and Big Joe Williams are worthy of much respect, while other, better known performers are worthy of much less. So we won't spend our time reviewing new records by the Kingston Trio just for the sake of putting them down. If they exceed our expectations we'll tell you so. Only if. On the other hand, we also have certain expectations of records by, say, Mississippi John Hurt. If such records exceed our expectations, or only live up to them, we'll certainly have much to talk about. If they don't, we have an obligation to ask why.

Undoubtedly many readers have noticed that we devote much space to contemporary pop music. We cannot be too glib about denying imminent allegations that we are Selling Out. After all, the Rolling Stones are possibly no more musicianly, and certainly no less commercial, than Barry Belafonte (remember the No. 1 whipping boy of the old ISK).

We have to begin our defense with a platitude...something like: "We are explorers of the whole realm of contemporary musical experience". But we do believe we have something unique to offer, in that we place traditional folk music solidly in the center of our universe, and establish it forevermore as home base for all our excursions. (May the ghost of Blind Lemon Jefferson forever haunt us should we stray too far).

We won't be pontificating about pop music keeping close to the roots. After all, the rootsiest performance Mick Jagger could ever conceive of would pale considerably beside the slightest trifle of Son House's, if roots were all we were looking for. We don't have room to dote on every hunk of Soul stamped out by a well-known Detroit assembly line. Actually, as far as pop goes, we're more interested in new conceptions, or really creative or unique reworkings of old ones, than we are in "roots".

We realize that most purveyors of pop music are chiefly interested in selling records (or, even better, 8-track tape cartridges). But we think you'll have a blast watching us deftly pluck each pearl out of the swine trough! Some of them may well prove worthy in every way of shelf space beside Columbia CL-1654 and County 502.

HERE WE ARE, AND THE ROLLER-COASTER.

HAVE A GOOD RIDE!

LEADBELLY: The Library of Congress Recordings  
(Elektra EKL 301/2)

This set has possibly been longer awaited by more people than any other in folk history. For a decade or more the titles here contained have gleamed like the pot of gold at the rainbow's end from their hiding place at the A.A.F.S. It's really hard to believe it's finally here, thanks to the good offices of Elektra and editor-compiler-annotator Lawrence Cohn.

This album is important not so much for previously unavailable song material (though there is no small bit of that) as for its presentation of earlier, often much stronger and more brilliant performances of songs already familiar through recordings made when Leadbelly was an old man. TAKE A WHIFF ON ME, IT'S TIGHT LIKE THAT and ELLA SPEED are just a few of the songs thus favored; the first of these has Leadbelly's range going much higher than it does on any later recordings. Other performances here are perhaps a shade inferior to previous releases, but nonetheless full of revelations: DEKALB BLUES, less foreboding but more driving than on Stinson; MALIA, DID YOU BAKING ME ANY SILVER, less intense but more high-spirited (and would you believe higher fidelity!) than on Stinson (where it's called GALLIS POLS); and a very long version of IRENE. Among the new songs are several blues, including an especially fine primitive blues, GAL IN TOWN WITH HER MOUTH CHUCK FULL OF GOLD, and another, THIRTY DAYS IN THE WORKHOUSE, with a most tantalizing fragment of guitar work at the end. There are also some "new" topical songs which should soon hit the Coffeehouse Top 30. And of even more coffeehouse interest is I' IT WASN'T FOR DICKY, a most curious song about a dead cow. Its tune and refrain explain why the Weavers used to say they learned KISSES SWEETER THAN WINE from Leadbelly. Also of interest are alternate versions of three songs Leadbelly also recorded for commercial companies, but which are not found on LP: BECKY DEAN, PACIEN' TOWNK (here called MATCH BOX BLUES) and FO' DAY WORRY. In each case the version here is much superior to the commercial one.

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The sound ranges from horrible to surprisingly good. The editing of the tapes is only fair, though; there are hasty splices. And a little extra effort could have resulted in a job really worthy of the material—such as the use of a variable speed turntable, which could have remedied the horrendous pitch change near the end of Mr. TOM HUGHES' 'TOM', as well as I'M SORRY MAMA, where the disc is obviously played several RPM faster than it was recorded. And patient retakes can usually eliminate needle skips such as those in If IT WASN'T FOR DICKY.

John's transcriptions are excellent; the notes are good, but why not some commentary on the songs? There are some nice pictures.

Just one more gripe: Nowhere is there any information on which songs came from which sessions. The sessions cover an eight-year span (1934-42), and lack of this information seriously handicaps the study of Leadbelly's developing and changing performance styles.

Our quibbles notwithstanding, this is a monumental set which will certainly be the last word on Leadbelly, at least until somebody turns up all the missing 1935 A.R.C. masters (and chances are many of those will be inferior to the Loft discs). It certainly far outshines the long-revered LAST SESSIONS on Folkways. This set should give us all cause to review the stature of this man who was first deified, then reviled by the folk-hippies-in-power. We vote for him as the greatest of all the songsters.

Review by AL WILSON..

THE MISSISSIPPI BLUES No. 2: THE DELTA, 1929-32  
(Orig. in OJL-11)

This is a collection of 16 sides by nine Mississippi Delta blues singers: two each by SON HOUSE, LOUISE JOHNSON, CHARLIE PATTON, J. D. SHORT, BLIND JOE REYNOLDS, ROBERT WILKINS, and HI-HENRY BROWN; and one each by GARFIELD AGENS and JOE CALICOTT. HOUSE contributes another of his two-sided epics, DRY SPELL BLUES, which is about the 1927 famine in

the Delta. Like the others, it is in the very highest category of blues recordings. It is in some ways reminiscent of Muddy Waters' 1941 recording of I BE'S TROUBLED, but is not so close that one could definitely claim that the latter is patterned on the former. JOHNSON is a good but not outstanding pianist who went with House, Patton and Willie Brown to the memorable 1930 Paramount session in Grafton, Wisconsin. The notes claim that it is the three greats mentioned who talk and shout on her record here, but I don't believe it.

PATTON's two sides are average (RAVTLIESNAKE BLUES) and poor (SCREAMIN' & HOLIERIN'). The (as yet unissued) PEA VINE BLUES would have been a vastly superior advertisement for Patton's two OJL LP's. I doubt anyone will burn a trail to their friendly record store upon hearing these, which is too bad, for Patton sales are low compared with other OJL reissues. J. D. SHORT emerges here as second only to House, a delightful surprise considering the pathetic quality of his guitar playing on recent Delmark and Folkways LP's. Both cuts here are top-notch. BLIND JOE REYNOLDS seems to me a good example of the "average" Delta blues-man. He is a good man working in a great style.

ROBERT WILKINS' best 78 is reissued here, and is definitely superior to that on OJL-5.

HI-HENRY BROWN's sides are superb two-guitar items, one of which is a blues rehash of the TITANIC folk syndrome.

GARFIELD AKERS' DOUGH ROLLER BLUES is musically identical with COTTONFIELD BLUES PART 2 (on OJL-2) and nearly as good (which is to say great).

JOE CALICOTT's song is very pleasant, though not in a league with much of the above.

This is another Must collection from OJL, right up there in quality with OJL's 2, 5, 7 and 8. Strongly recommended.



# Review by David Evans

BLIND WILLIE McTELL: The Legendary Library of  
Congress Session, 1940 (Melodeon )

Blind Willie McTell is one of the major figures on country blues records. Although he is well represented on LP, his name is seldom mentioned among the greats. Little recent effort has been made to document the Georgia blues tradition he represents; this new release should help to remedy the situation.

SMERNZ

Dick Spottswood of Melodeon is to be applauded for releasing the entire session including interviews and for printing John A. Lomax's field notes. The interviews reveal McTell to have been quite intelligent and articulate. He has studied his music carefully and displays a truly professional attitude. Lomax cuts him off on several occasions when he doesn't provide the "correct" answer that Lomax is seeking. He is looking for songs of social protest, which are, in fact, rare in Negro music.

But we must realize that the Lomaxes, John and his son Alan, were among the great collectors of all time. John A. Lomax was one of the first to take a sympathetic interest in secular Negro music, although this sometimes bordered on the patronizing. Also he recognized the importance of commercial recordings when other folklorists ignored them. The breadth of his interests is shown in this record, which contains spirituals, ballads, a blues, a ragtime song, even a pop song. And the interviews, however brief, show that he was careful to obtain background information.

Getting to the music, we find the six spirituals to be the highlight of the record. All are played in bottleneck style with forceful singing. There are five ballads on the album, of which CHAINY and WILL AX are rarely heard. He does a fine long version of DELIA. The one blues, MUDDEKER'S HOME BLUES, is a fine piece with excellent guitar.

Blind Willie's guitar style is distinguished for its rhythm changes and strong bass. This is admirably suitable for the 12-string instrument he plays. His earliest sides from the 1920's are usually considered his best. This 1940 session shows no diminution in his artistry or approach to music, but rather a change in repertoire.

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For years now, collectors have had to struggle mightily, often vainly, to hear LOFT recordings such as these, and those by Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie and Muddy Waters. Recently the library has been granting issue rights to several commercial labels. It is to be hoped that the blues fan will be rewarded with much more of the library's priceless material.

**W**y We gladly devote a half page to a young organization of which we are quite fond. On a more objective basis, we see CANNED HEAT as the best blues band on the Coast, one of the hardest and tightest groups anywhere, and as a group whose devotion to the straight, un gimmicked electric blues sound is unswerving to the point of self-sacrifice.

CANNED HEAT consists of Henry Vestine, lead guitar; Al Wilson, second (bottleneck) guitar & harmonica; Stu Brotman, bass; Frank Cook, drums; and Bob Hite, vocals. Bob and Henry are two of the country's foremost blues collectors and scholars; Henry was one of the discoverers of Skip James. Al Wilson is heard on the Columbia Son House album, and his keen ear for blues and rock alike is quite evident in this magazine. Stu developed his consummate skill playing instruments of all nations at UCIA's Institute of Ethnomusicology; Frank developed his gigging with the likes of Chet Baker, Danny Zeitlin and Shirley Ellis. Both now devote full time to CANNED HEAT. So should you, America!



BOB DYLAN: Blonde on Blonde (Columbia CBS 841)

A few words may suffice to describe the album jacket to those who have not seen it. It is a two-pocket job, and the outside opens up to reveal (the long way) a particularly hideous portrait of our hero, nearly full-length. Inside are no notes, but assorted dim photographs of B.D. and various other creatures, unidentified.

The records inside are probably equally representative of the relentless caprices of this wondrous man. The whole album is band-accompanied; in fact, it was recorded in Nashville, using local musicians as well as the usual crew.

For the time we'll not plumb the intricacies of the poetry. It strikes us as being quite good, but we don't have space to do it any justice in this first issue. (We never had that much of a purely literary bent anyway). It is quite possible that more enlightened commentary will be forthcoming in a later issue.

That leaves us with the music. Some of it is quite felicitous, such as the well-known RAINY DAY WOMEN (here heard in a longer version than on the 45), 4TH TIME AROUND, OBVIOUSLY 5 BELIEVERS, and the new single, I WANT YOU. But too often for our taste the music just forms a diffuse background for what is really heavily (and eccentrically) inflected recitation, rather than singing. This is true on the cut that occupies the whole of Side 4 (if you look closely, you notice that the grooves are unusually spread out; the side is not much over ten minutes long).

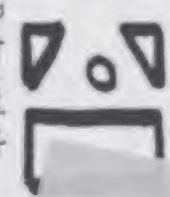
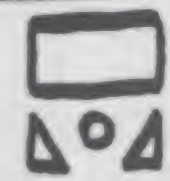
Dylan has always had the power to make fools of those who knock him; his creations seem to gain in importance and stature with the passing of time. At first sight, every one of his albums sounds like decadence itself. I don't think his ultimate stature will ever be decided by his contemporaries.

hey man, I mean, WOW - - -

SEND BACK THE FAHEY TAPES!

- - - Chester C. Petranick

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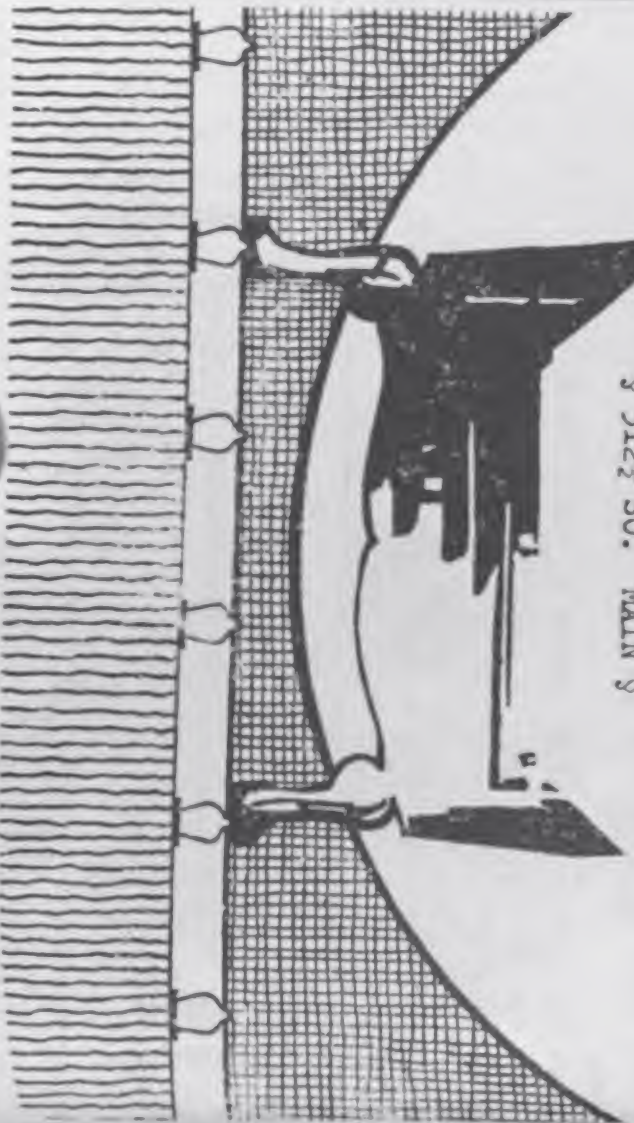
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# REVIEW BY NORMAN COHEN

UNCLE DAVE MACON (Decca DL 4760)

Old-Timey enthusiasts—and aficionados of all early recorded Americana—should make a few bows of gratitude to Decca Records (and Ralph Kinzler) for at last dipping into their vaults to bring us 14 selections by one of the greatest hillbilly artists of them all. M  
F  
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The gems in this most recent Macon treasure-chest were recorded between 1926 and 1929. On five sides, Uncle Dave is accompanied by his Fruit Jar Drinkers (Sam McGee, guitar, and Kirk McGee and Mazy Todd, fiddles); on three others, by one or both McGees, and on two, by Sid Harkreader on guitar. Ralph Kinzler has provided extensive biographical notes on Macon and his accompanists, and complete discographical data for the selections featured—a first in the hillbilly music field.

Born in Tennessee in 1870, Macon did not become a professional musician until 1918, and he was 54 years old before he made his first records. In the next 14 years he cut over 150 selections. Although he last recorded in 1938, he continued to travel about and make public performances—for a while with Bill Monroe's band. In 1926 he joined the Grand Ole Opry (still called the WSM Barn Dance then) and performed regularly until three weeks before his death in 1952.

More than any other of the great hillbilly artists of the day (such as Ernest Stoneman, Gid Tanner, Riley Puckett or the Carter Family) Macon's vast repertoire strongly reflected the professional stage tradition (minstrel shows & vaudeville) as opposed to the non-professional folk tradition. This is understandable, as Macon's parents ran a hotel in Nashville which catered to theatre people, and Uncle Dave was thoroughly exposed to the business in his youth. Thus, the majority of his songs are not among the standard items of the usual folk repertoire, and in this regard the record is representative. Uncle Dave used many miniature minstrel-show formats on his records, and there are three such on this album, each of which packs into three minutes a unique combination of banjo virtuosity, anecdotes and jokes, a song or two, and possibly a didactic epigram.

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Like the neurotic person who refuses to grow up, the South has resisted industrialization and its concomitant social changes, seeking to hold on to the culture of its youth, so to speak. Thus the songs of 50-75 years ago, forgotten elsewhere, are remembered and cherished in the South. In Uncle Dave's repertoire, the resistance to the industrial age is more pointed still, and allusions to the evils of automobiles and other machinery are frequent. The story of the Ford car in TENNESSEE JUBILEE is only a mild example.

UNCLE DAVE'S TRAVELS—PART 1 is a version of the widespread traditional ballad STATE OF ARKANSAS. The tune is not the common one (of which Kelly Harrell's MY NAME IS JOHN JOHANNA on the Folkways Anthology is an example).

Three cuts feature the Fruit Jar Drinkers on instrumentals (with vocal work by Uncle Dave). This string band generally used the ensemble approach, with fiddles in unison and banjo playing melody simultaneously. Unfortunately this style often leads to a whole that is somewhat less than the sum of its parts, and that sometimes happens with this group. These are all sturdy string band numbers; however I am less enthusiastic about Mazy Todd's fiddling than Rinzler seems to be. LATE LAST NIGHT WHEN MY WILLIE CAME HOME, perhaps best known to city folk through the version by Doc Watson and Clarence Ashley called WAX DOWNTOWN, features restrained finger-picking by Sam McGee on guitar—the merest hint of his skills in that genre. One religious number, SHALL WE GATHER AT THE RIVER, by the Dixie Sacred Singers (Macon and the McGee brothers) is included.

Judging by the recordings preserved, Uncle Dave was surely the most versatile banjo player in the history of hillbilly music. He was equally skillful at both frailing and picking styles; SHALL WE GATHER provides a tasteful example of the latter. If he was a little sloppy on some of his more fiery numbers, I am willing to attribute it to his age. Perhaps more important than his playing and singing, however, is his role as professional raconteur, for he has single-handedly preserved for us a handsome body of tales and anecdotes documenting vaudeville and minstrel humor around the turn of the century.

Inevitably this record will be compared with the Polkways-RBF LP of a few years ago, devoted to Uncle Dave. While the Decca album is better documented, I think the RBF has the edge musically, particularly because Uncle Dave's singing is shown to better advantage. If the Decca has any definite faults, it is in the lack of information about the songs. However, this minor cavil should not keep the album from being a part of everyone's library.

THIRTEEN

## Review of *Kathy Kaplan*

THE STANLEY BROTHERS (Melodeon MLP 7322)

One of many re-issues reaching the market these days is this new LP. If it is aimed in any way towards the scholar (surely small companies don't produce for the commercial market) it is a failure. These are supposed to be "early" recordings, but we don't know exactly where they're from. Were they recorded within a short period of time, or over a number of years? Likewise, there aren't any notes on the songs (why two recordings of LITTLE GLASS OF WINE?) or even the performers. Are we to assume that the musicians featured on the cover (Carter Stanley-guitar, Ralph Stanley-banjo; Pee Wee Lambert-mandolin, and Leslie Keith-fiddle) perform throughout the album?

The sound quality is poor. There is much echo, as well as a great amount of surface noise. This isn't too annoying in most cases, but on several bands it all but drowns out the music.

According to the notes, this record presents "some of the first successful attempts to perform modern bluegrass in the classic pattern established by Monroe...". I question the word "successful". As a whole, the music on this album (with the exception of the Scruggs-style banjo, and even LITTLE BIDDIE doesn't feature that) is a lot closer to mountain music than bluegrass. The mandolin, a key instrument in bluegrass, is rarely heard except on a few numbers. There seems to be little precision, and even the singing is rather loose. And, contrary to the notes again, the one thing that the Stanley

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Brothers don't seem to perform with is fire. They are perhaps the most casual of all bluegrass groups.

In spite of all this, I'm not saying the album is bad. It's good music, but not good bluegrass. There is some fine solo work (LITTLE MAGGIE, MOLLY AND TENBROOKS, and RAMBLER'S BLUES). Although some of the material is quite familiar, a lot of it is interesting. Death, whether from a religious viewpoint or whatever, seems to be predominant. One unusual song is LITTLE GLASS OF WINE. It starts off as a PRETTY POLLY-type murder story, and ends up more like THE SILVER DAGGER with both lovers dead. Parents are warned in THE LITTLE GIRL AND THE DREADFUL SNAKE not to let their children stray. It sort of reminded me of WHERE IS YOUR DAUGHTER TONIGHT? which is funny because they have nothing to do with each other. I'm surprised that our great "rambling" population, the city folks, haven't adopted RAMBLER'S BLUES as a theme song or something. Aren't they the ones who are always talking about sleeping in hay sacks and living in box cars? After a number of listenings, I still found MOLLY AND TENBROOKS my favorite cut. That song is always exciting, though this recording isn't as good as Monroe's. Also very good are the COW ARK YOU WAITING FOR ME and the gospel I CAN TELL YOU THE TIME. (What you can hear of it, anyway).

Although they certainly aren't objectionable, the Stanley Brothers have never been among my favorite bluegrass groups. Some of the reasons why are shown on this record.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a bootleg reissue, and details of the source are omitted for legal reasons. The records were all made in the late 1940's. The album is available from Box 7102, Arlington, Va.)

#### RETURN OF KOKERIK, RAY & GLOVER (Elektra EKL-305)

What was shocking in 1963 has become arch-conservative in 1966, as the Boys from Minnesota who first dared to demonstrate that white boys can sing blues now emerge as the last holdouts against rock. May there always be a place for them. This latest gambol in the golden fields of blues is as brisk and forceful as any of their previous work. Nelson's notes will delight the most demanding hippy.



ARTICLE BY AL WILSON

# ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS HIS LIFE AND MUSIC

> FIRST OF TWO PARTS<

FINEN

Los Angeles has just been graced by a visit from today's finest, and least appreciated, bluesman. Robert Pete Williams put on an impressive show of improvisatory blues at the Ash Grove, and also consented to a series of interviews with David Evans and myself during which we attempted to discern something of the mental processes behind music so often excellent, and nearly always unique. This article is the result of these interviews.

Robert Williams (Pete is a teenage nickname) was born in Zachary, Louisiana on March 14, 1914, and had six sisters (three older, three younger) and two brothers (both older). Zachary is a suburb of Baton Rouge, and Pete has lived in this small area all his life, currently living in Scotlandville. Outside of writing his name and telling time he is illiterate, for in his large family all worked and there was, of necessity, no schooling. From age 17 till 29 he worked on a dairy farm, and in subsequent years labored in barrel mills, highway crews, levee camps, and farms. Before last year's hurricane destroyed his last home he raised chickens, hogs, and garden vegetables. Now he works at the Central Lumber Company in Baton Rouge for \$1.35 an hour, easily the best job he has ever held. He had one that paid better, a job cleaning dirty oil barrels with caustic solution that paid \$1.95 an hour, but there was a catch—in a year's work, a few accidents were inevitable. As a result the chemical burns he suffered still disfigure his left arm, though he did this work twenty years ago, in 1947 and 1948.

(Text continued on page eighteen)

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Robert Pete was convicted of murder (he insists it was self-defense) and imprisoned at Angola State Penitentiary in Louisiana on April 6, 1956. He was released in 1959, but served an arduous five-year parole as a virtual slave to a local farmer until his full release was granted prior to the 1964 Newport Folk Festival at which he appeared for the first time outside his home state. His 1948 marriage (his third) has lasted and he now has ten living children, eight boys and two girls. Two other sons have died.

Robert Pete has a strong inclination towards religion which unfortunately conflicts with his equally strong inclination towards blues. Thus he has several times given up the guitar only to submit to the urge to start again. He worries about this and even now is looking forward to the time when he will again "live up to my religion". He also claims proficiency in prophetic card and coffee-cup reading, at least one conjuring spell, and occasional clairvoyance. My interest was intrigued, to say the least, when in an unexplained mood of sudden agitation he fearfully called his home—to find out that his young son had just been taken seriously ill and had been taken to the hospital (he was to recover in a few days). Robert Pete saw nothing unusual in this apparent clairvoyance, for such occurrences had taken place in his life before, or so he told us. After all, he was his mother's seventh child, and "the seventh child is a wonderful child". And also all this amounted to little compared to what a friend of his could do. He could move or raise from the floor a table—without touching it!

Robert Pete's was a musical family. His oldest brother was a pianist ("the best I ever heard"), and also a guitarist, who later quit music for the church. One sister played guitar, and another, Mabel Lee Franklin, played both, and still does. Robert Pete started out on the harmonica, and went on to Jew's harp, elastic band, beating on buckets, and a four-string cigar-box guitar strung with baling wire, and with no frets. He struggled awhile with a \$1.50 guitar "with strings an inch high", and finally obtained a good \$4.00 guitar, and started

to make real headway.

In these teenage years Williams was very impressed by the playing of his uncle, Simon Carney.

Carney, who unfortunately died just last year, played knife guitar in what Pete calls "E minor"—actually open D (from bottom string to top, DAD<sup>F</sup>AD). "I was a kid then", says Robert, "just sitting around looking at him play the guitar and how good he could make it sound with that bottle—it just would shock me, go up all through me, you know."

Even better were two other knife men, Solomon Bradd and the best of them all, Dan Jackson. They also fretted the guitar, but in both methods the tuning was the same; Spanish (open G, DGDGBD). These were older men, and Pete thinks all three served in World War I, which would put their birth dates in or before 1900. Both are now dead.

Closer to his own age were Robert and Frank Metty, who fretted with both knife and fingers, and Henry Gaines, who fretted only with his fingers. All are alive, but the Mettys have also put down music for the church. Today his musical friends are Silas Hogan, Lazy Lester, Slim Harpo, Lightning Slim and other Excello recording artists of the area. He often goes to hear Lightning Slim in the local joints on weekends, and almost recorded for Excello himself. Other of his friends (who haven't dabbled with amplifiers!) are the folk-lyric artists Smoky Babe, Sally Dotson, and Hillary Brunt, among others.

At the beginning of his career Robert Pete tried his hand at knife guitar, attempting to play like Carney, Jackson and Bradd—and he flopped. All that remains now of this period is ROLLING STONE in Spanish (on Bluesville #1026), musically the same as Jackson's POOR BOY, and GAMBLING MAN in open D (unrecorded), a Simon Carney song. But he didn't mind this failure, for knife was but a sideline to him. He had taken to "C natural"—actually standard tuning (EADGBE), and foremost in his mind were the sounds, not of the local knife performers, but of a phonograph artist, Blind Lemon Jefferson. "I took

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after Blind Lemon", says Robert Pete. "I used to listen to Blind Lemon's records, more than I did anyone's records that was ever put out, because I was interested and I loved to hear him." Blind Lemon's speed and flexibility meant much more to him than the knife style, and (judging by today's reaction to such records) if he ever heard the Mississippi style with its emphasis on crude, driving guitar, it too meant little next to Lemon's deft string manipulations. Thus it is no surprise that, of all postwar artists, he strongly prefers Lightnin' Hopkins, for once again the flexibility and grace of the younger Texan meant more to him than any of the less refined sounds being put down by the transplanted Mississippians and their rough-hewn amplified bands.

This orientation was to shape Williams' music, and it is logical to assume that in the 1930-40 period the characteristic deftness of execution, overall loose character, and intricate rhythms which comprise the essentials of his recorded style were fully present. And yet one important change was yet to come, a change which occurred in or about 1942. Robert Pete demonstrated this change in graphic terms to David Evans in an interview which I missed. Evans had asked Pete if he had ever changed his style, and the answer was "Yes". Asked to explain, Robert Pete instructed him to pay attention as he played two songs. The first, in E minor (standard tuning), sounded much like A THOUSAND MILES FROM NOWHERE (on Bluesville #1026). It had a heavier bass than usual for him and, while using a fairly intricate right hand, he did not venture up the neck past the third fret with his left. However on the second number, in A minor (standard tuning), his left hand was everywhere, based primarily in the fifth- to eighth-fret area, but going as high as the thirteenth fret, and with frequent quick glides on the bass strings. Then he explained as follows:

This here (indicating the song he had just completed), that carries so many notes to it, you see. I'm picking from the box back down to the

key, and then I wasn't doing it a while ago—I was just from here (plays note on the third fret)—but now I'm picking from the box back down to the key, and then I can stay up at the box and pick too, you know, which a lot of people can't do.

Some people pick a guitar, they'll stay right down there at the key and that's far as they can go, but if you're going to pick a guitar, go ahead on, learn what you can on, play from the box on back down to the key, you see. I plays like that.

At this point Evans asked when he had changed his style. Pete replied:

Well, I changed my style when I see where I could find more notes on a guitar. I was a grown man when I changed my style then—I say I was about 28 years old then.

Now Evans asked what Pete felt was responsible for a change resulting after playing another way for ten years. Pete answered:

The sound of the atmosphere, the weather changed my style. But I could hear, since we being an air-music man. The air came in different, with a different sound of music. Well, the atmosphere, when the wind blowing carries music along. I don't know if it affect you or not, but it's a sounding that's in the air, you see? And I don't know where it comes from—it could come from the airplanes, of the moaning of automobiles, but anyhow it leaves an air current in the air, you see. That gets in the wind, makes a sounding, you know? And that sounding works up to be a blues.

His admiration for Blind Lemon inspired Williams to become an extremely facile guitarist: fortunately, he did not also adopt Lemon's harmonic scheme. Like most other later blues guitarists with exceptional facility, Lemon played not in the modal framework, but within a chordal one. These "sophisticated"

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guitarists inevitably adopted the only harmonic language they heard around them: the supreme blandness of the I-IV-V progressions of American pop music, or worse still, that old favorite, the ever-so-happy ragtime progression (in the key of C, A-D-G-C), brought to bear on the country blues idiom for the first time (on record) by the same Blind Lemon Jefferson. This trend was to culminate in the work of the Broonzys, McGees, and Josh Whites, who have succeeded in developing some rather complicated ways of saying nothing. Fortunately Robert Pete Williams, like Skip James and Robert Johnson, developed his technique to a considerable level without abandoning the essentially modal concept from which primitive blues drew its strength. Robert Pete's left-hand technique is based not on a chordal language, but on a thorough knowledge of the blues modal scale in all areas of most keys, facilitating extensive melodic improvisation on nearly any piece, plus a small number of effective chords (usually partial ones) for spice.

Ninety percent of his songs are done in the five keys in which he can, and does, improvise guitar solos and fill-ins at will in any area of the fingerboard. These keys are E, A and D in standard tuning, and G and D in Spanish. He often maintains the A-A-B framework of the standard blues structure, but there is almost never a reliance on the standard metrical structure of 2-2-2-2-2-2 (underlined numerals indicate vocal units) measures. Instead the units (particularly the guitar portions) are extended, often greatly, to accommodate the spontaneous improvisation which is the cornerstone of his style. Such people as Lightnin' Hopkins, John Lee Hooker, and Big Joe Williams do this also, but their extensions aren't as prolonged, their figures tend to be cliches (each has about eight) which recur from song to song, and they don't know nearly as many keys. Thus Robert Pete fulfills a unique condition in blues, one which the others merely hint at; a musical style in which improvisation plays nearly as important a role as pre-determined factors.

(To be continued)

Muddy Waters: Down on Stovall's Plantation  
(Testament T-2210)

This is another in today's welcome spate of issues of previously buried LC material. And certainly nothing the Library of Congress ever collected is more vital to the history of blues than this batch of sides by the 26-year-old Muddy Waters, solo and as a member of a country dance band led by fiddler (and Paramount record artist) Henry "Son" Sims.

All the music on this album is in straight Delta traditional style. The band cuts hark back to the 1920's and earlier, and Waters' participation establishes his knowledge and competence within the basic idiom. His own solo performances represent the Delta idiom of the late 1930's, dominated by the very slightly modernized style of Robert Johnson, who must have been quite a local hero during his brief career.

But these recordings look forward as well as backward. This music, with surprisingly few changes, was the backbone of Waters' early work as an electric bluesman in Chicago, and carried over strongly into his later work (even before he decided recently that it was hip, and profitable, to play in the old way on purpose). Several of the songs here (I BE' S TROUBLED, COUNTRY BLUES and YOU GOT TO TAKE SICK AND DIE) were re-recorded for Chess.

Waters' solo performances are as exquisite as any of Johnson's, and often nearly as tense. The group work is admittedly casual and unrehearsed, but it gets there just the same.

It's always fun to dig for literary treasures in Pete Welding's accurate and informative notes. This one has some beauts: "a music shot through with the tension, bitterness, stark power and raw passion of life lived at the brink of despair. Poised between life and death, the delta bluesman gave vent to his terror, frustration, rage and passionate humanity in a music that was taut with dark, brooding force and blinding intensity, that was jagged, crude, raw as an open wound, and profoundly—inexorably—moving". What music can match such eloquence?

S. D. Nunn's remastering atones for nearly all the sins of the LC's equipment.

# ISR's SUPER SOUNDS

THE SPENCER DAVIS GROUP Somebody Help Me/Stevie's Blues (Atco 6416) Lead singer Stevie Wynwood is the best soul singer in England. Good band blues too.

**BYRDS** 5 D (Fifth Dimension)/Captain Soul (Columbia 43702) Whatever 5 D is officially about, unofficially it is one of the better pop songs on the subject.

The sunlit agony of McGuinn's guitar highlights both tracks, the second of which is instrumental.

**LOVE** 7 and 7 is / No. Fourteen (Elektra 45605) Hey, it's a freak-out single! Singing is rank, but the stupendous climax (culminating in a real thunderclap) is very nicely played and engineered.

**NICK THE GREEK** Whole Lotta Soul/Drunken Boat (Out of Sight 45-1) N.the G. is Nick Gravenites, writer of Butterfield's BORN IN CHICAGO. These two songs are only fair, and the singing is lackluster, but the instrumental tracks are sensational, especially the 2nd side which has Butterfield on harp, Erwin Helfer on harpsichord. Order thru Testament Records.

**DONOVAN** Sunshine Superman/The Trip (Epic 10045) Better rock production than D. got from his old label, and first side is one of his better songs.

**ELMO JAMES** Dust My Broom/Gotta Find My Baby (Jewel 764) Reissue of the original on Trumpet, with Sonny Boy Williamson on harp. But they blew it on the flip; it's by Arthur Crudup, who made it under the pseudonym Elmer James.

**SUNDAY SERVANTS** Who Do You Love/I'm Puttin' You On (Liberty 77825) Topside is a clever, likeable job on the Diddley standard, with a backwards guitar passage.

§ JON PANKAKE and PAUL NELSON, the former editor-publishers of ISR, have both offered to contribute to Volume 2. Their non-appearance in this issue is due to our failure to specify exactly what kind of articles we would like in time for the deadline. There has been no falling out. We will undoubtedly have several contributions from each of them in the near future.

§ Look for Vol. 2, No. 2 in early October; Vol. 2, No. 3 around Christmas.



THE ROLLING STONES: Aftermath (London LL3476)

It wasn't too long ago that we envisioned these chaps as the salvation of the blues. There is no doubt that, through much lip-service and a few records, they had a major role in starting the current electric-blues revival. Looking back from 1966 to their years as a blues band (which I think we can now say are over) we can't find a lot to show for this phase on records, though; early Jagger sounds gawkiier with each passing day.

But never mind, really; the quality of the Stones' work since THE LAST TIME has more than consoled us for the loss of a blues-band. They have given the Beatles a very hard run for their money both artistically and commercially.

At last year's and the Beatles scored a touchdown with RUBBER SOUL. In many ways, this is the Stones' effort to reply in kind. Like RUBBER SOUL, AFTERMATH impresses by sleight of hand, not by brute force. The Stones prove as clever as their rivals in producing great variety in mood, texture, musical form, instrumentation, and song material.

PAINT IT BLACK needs no introduction to AM radio fans; but the LP has a different "mix" of the tape, in which the sitar emerges more clearly. UNDER MY THUMB is a superb song, and has a marvelous instrumental track with marimba. But nobody but the wonderful M. J. could get away with so many baldly misused notes and not get chased whimpering back to the microphone for another take. Side 1 also presents an elegant neoclassical dance of heart and hand, with harpsichord and dulcimore, for LADY JANE.

Side 2 is more mysterious. The songs are duller, the performances less brilliant than on Side 1. But the side as a whole is quite the more enjoyable of the two. FLIGHT 505 begins with a chorus of solo piano boogie woogie, with a segue (via a hint of SATISFACTION) into Jagger singing a deadpan song about taking an airplane trip that ends as he ditches in the sea. He swims to shore in time to sing the next song (appropriately HIGH AND DRY). It is a trifle, but accompanied on a not badly played acoustic twelve-string. The next two have some nice duet singing. Then comes the eleven-minute wonder, I'M

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GOING HOME. The first three minutes are an ordinary song. The other 8½? Various vocal adlibs and instrumental wanderings not really adding up to much or getting anywhere (certainly not home). It remains a gas, I think, mainly because there is nothing else on rock records anywhere that is this relaxed and informal. Many thanks to whoever had the brilliant idea of including it.

**THE BEATLES: Yesterday and Today (Capitol W2553)**

This album doesn't quite have the smashing impact of RUBBER SOUL, but that's only because eight of its eleven cuts are already familiar to the dedicated among us, via singles or (in 2 cases) the British edition of RUBBER SOUL. Musically, it is a tossup between the two sets, for all-time Beatle-album excellence.

More consistent than the Stones, the Beatles do not provide quite as much fodder for analysis. They would never stand for Jagger's floundering intonation. On the other hand they will probably never produce a trip to match I'M GOIN' HOME. They are less intense than the Stones, but in saying what must be said in the cleverest, cutest way possible, they are probably speaking just as true-to-life.

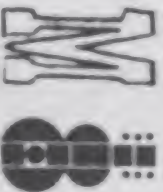
For comment on the individual cuts, we could start with IF I NEEDED SOMEONE, with its exquisite passages in parallel fifths. DRIVE MY CAR is full of little delights: the harmony of the fourth line, the beat (which one might call Motown with grace), the exhilaratingly cute emulation of the car horn, the words with their ramifications about youth vs. the entertainment business. YESTERDAY made the Beatles thousands of friends among connoisseurs of inoffensive music; we hate to admit it but we liked it, and still do. AND YOUR BIRD CAN SING has a most notable guitar part, a delicious fusion of Mozart and hard-rock, well-turned even for the Beatles. Yea rah-rah George Martin.

The Beatles show no signs of losing their touch. If they don't get eaten alive by cannibals in New Guinea, as punishment for no-showing a command performance for the chief's wives at 7:15 A.M., they'll be delighting us for quite some while yet.

THE VILLAGE FUGS (Broadside BR 304; also available  
on ESP as THE FUGS' FIRST ALBUM)  
THE FUGS (ESP: 1028)

The second of these LP's is now living a dizzying existence in the lower reaches of the Top 100. Three years ago it would have been difficult to conceive of such an album even being released to the public. Today many stores still hide it under the counter, but these vestiges of puritanism are fast falling before the artful grossities of Sanders, Kuperberg and Co., to the accompaniment of a tune on the Cash Box. These two albums, sensational upon first hearing, are now a bit overshadowed by the impact of the Mothers' album on Verve. It was the Fugs, however, who led the way for hip spoofs in and of the rock idiom, and who discovered for the world the unsurpassed possibilities of that idiom for avant-garde art. (What could the Fugs have done with the idiom of Eddie Fisher?) The subject matter of the Fugs' creations is more limited than that of the Mothers'. The Fugs dwell mostly on the pursuit of amatory happiness, a subject they handle with all the gusto, and all the finesse, of a frat-house rendition of ROLL YOUR LEG OVER. To their Top 100 customers they probably emerge as a rather arty counterpart of DOUBLE SHOT OF MY BABY'S LOVE. But their BOOBS A LOT (BR 304) and GROUP GROPE (ESP 1028) are certainly destined for classic stature in the field.

There are other delights to be sure. The Broadside set has some magnificent excursions into literary-rock. And ESP 1028 has a genuine eleven-minute freak-out, VIKING FOLKLORE; apparently this and the Mothers' set was made without mutual knowledge. FOLKLORE is less consistent and less skillfully produced than the Mothers' work, but it has glorious moments for the well-prepared beholder, being a significant departure from the rather beery aspect of most of their other efforts on these discs.



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THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION: Freak Out!  
(Verve V6-5005-2)

**THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION**  
Ostensibly, this is a rock album. Four LP sides (for the price of two) of originals conceived, arranged and produced by Frank Zappa, a musician whose obscurity "back east" is matched by his singular fame in the musical underworld of L.A.

The Mothers (the other two words were added by the record company) are excellent musicians, crude but usually effective singers. But it is narrow-minded and misleading to criticize them with the vocabulary by which one usually judges a band, even a far-out rock band. For this is not an album of songs. It is an album of trips. Auditory guides to excursions of the beholding mind, so to speak. And the mind is guided not only by music, but by words, the ideas in the words, and by human, animal and electronic sounds of every description, many of which are musical only in the broad sense favored by the most avant-garde "classical" composers. As the garishly psychedelic cover suggests, the listener is advised to intensify his experience with spiritual condiments of his choice. (Frankly, the album can taste gosh-awful without such seasoning).

The order of the four sides is crucial. On the first two cuts the band shows its purely musical stuff, but the fuggish singing and the words (which are revolting, in both meanings of that word, for their own sake) make it quite clear that something is not what it appears to be. The real character and magnitude of Zappa's work first shows on track 3, WHO ARE THE BRAIN POLICE? This is perhaps the most basic of all protest songs, and it also contains the album's first extended use of nonconventional sounds.

From this point on, through Side 2, the group presents a series of parodies in various rock idioms. Sometimes they parody the idioms themselves; sometimes the idioms serve as a framework for parodies of other things. There are a couple burlesques of Mexicans which are very funny at first hearing, but which pall thereafter and are, to put it mildly, in questionable taste. But the musical recreations are marvelous. On HOW COULD I BE SUCH A FVOL Verve has spared no session-money to produce a full-scale

impression of the most bloated pop idioms of circa 1961. This phase of the album is wound up with YOU'RE PROBABLY WONDERING WHY I'M HERE, perhaps the most profound statement ever made by a contemporary musician about his life's work.

All of the first record, however, is but a prelude to the second. Side 3 comes on strong, mighty strong, with a protest song called TROUBLE COMIN' EVERY DAY. It is the most serious piece in the album. In its attack on many aspects of unhip society, it gets a bit cliché-ridden, but certain portions are stupendous. Blues hippies will cream over the interjection of Lightnin' Slim's "blow your harmonica son", but instead of blowing our troubles away, the French harp introduces a frantic instrumental passage that might be called the "burn baby burn" section.

After this piece has battered the mind into ultimate receptability, the band gets down to the real business of Freak-Out, meaning all the kinds of suggestive sounds discussed earlier. HELP I'M A NOOK is the definitive Freakout cut on records, with adventures of the mind pieced together as carefully and effectively as Stravinsky puts notes together. The fourth side is a continuation of this. Of its two cuts, the first is more diffuse, with an incessant jazz figure on drums being the only link with ordinary music, or the real world. The final cut returns to the methods of Side 3, with new trip-episodes of its own plus recollections of earlier cuts.

Indeed a momentous album. We think it may be the most momentous of the year in the pop field, and the second disc at least is also worthy of estimation in the avant-garde "classical" category. It won't be everyone's cup of tea. The cover and parts of the discs have an exceedingly in-groupy attitude that will annoy some. (It's intentional). But the preceding paragraphs should give the reader a broad hint whether he should make Verve V6-5055-2 part of his life.

Incidentally, buy it in stereo if possible. The separations are very cleverly used to enhance the suggestiveness. It may be the first valid stereo record in history. (Review by bn, incorporating many suggestions by Al Wilson)

101  
2  
no. 2

27

THE BLUES PROJECT LIVE AT THE CAFE AU GO GO  
(Verve-Folkways ~~W~~/FWS 9024)

The B.P. is not too bad at folk-rock numbers like **CATCH THE WIND**. But their blues attempts result in the loudest catastrophe since the explosion of **Krakatoa**. Danny Kalb on guitar sounds like Les Paul imitating Mike Bloomfield. Lots of notes, and the skeleton of the style, but no satisfaction. And whenever he takes a solo (especially toward the end of Side 2) the piano player, Al Kooper, decides to take a solo at the same time, and to try and play more notes than Kalb does. It's all pretty diarrhetic. But you know, it might be half listenable if the rhythm section came through with the slightest semblance of a riff; no chance, baby. The singing is like the playing—spectacular, but no taste, and no foundation. We do hope they're better in person.

THE LOVIN' SPOONFUL, THE PAUL BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND,  
ERIC CLAPTON AND THE POWERHOUSE, TOM KUSH, AL KOOPER:  
What's Shakin' (Elektra SKL-4002)

The cuts by Butterfield date back quite a spell, as does the cover picture of them. They do not represent the current quality of this band, which is the finest electric group playing anywhere in the world today. But they are very good, especially the ones on Side 2. The cuts by the Spoonful must be even older; it is interesting to hear what they sounded like before they began to sound like the Lovin' Spoonful. (There is a glimmer of what was to come on the first cut). The single cut by Kooper is much solidier and more tasteful than his work with the Blues Project. The one by Kush is, however, a tank job. Eric Clapton, an Englishman, nearly steals the show with his violent yet tasteful hard-blues guitar; his band is strong at all positions including vocal. The set is one of the better of Elektra's "projects".

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# ROCK + ROLL HALL OF FAME

no. 1



## ARTHUR "GUITAR BOOGIE" SMITH

BOOGIE, recorded in the 1940's and successfully imitated in 1958 (by The Virtues), survives on an MGM "Golden Circle" single.

THIRTY - ONE

We have to give Negro musicians credit for the lion's share of what we know as rock & roll. But few realize that the idiom owes its most prominent instrumental idioms—those of the electric guitar—largely to white country & western musicians. The Negro rock & roll of the early 1950's made very little use of the guitar. But the white musicians who adapted the Negro sound had a huge vocabulary of boogie and blues licks on electric guitar, that fit perfectly into the emerging rock style. The prominence of guitar on early white rock may even have set off the new wave of Negro guitar that began with Chuck Berry.

The white "guitar boogie" style was largely the creation of the man celebrated here, who made many best-selling C&W records in the late 1940's, on the MGM label. Today Smith is a successful TV producer in the South, with a show featuring James Brown as well as a C&W show starring himself. He owns a large recording studio in Charlotte, and still records for Dot; DLP 3600 features recreations of his old Guitar Boogie hits. The original GUITAR

vol 2  
no. 2

RY

ROBERT PETE WILLIAMS in Malibu,  
Calif. \$\$\$ Photo-David Evans







CONFIDENTIAL  
REVIEW  
SANDY  
LITTLE  
THE

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no. 23

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THE LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW

POETRY ROOM

**ON OUR COVER...** this month is Hobart Smith, singer, guitarist, banjoist, and fiddler from Saltville, Virginia. Mr. Smith is appearing at the Third Annual University of Chicago Folk Festival this year along with Bill Monroe, the New Lost City Ramblers, Sam Charters, Ralph Rinzler, Fred McDowell, Almeda Riddle, Bessie Jones, and others; and can be heard on Atlantic, Prestige International Documentary, Tradition, and Folkways Records. Cover drawing is by Jon Pankake.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

*BY PAUL NELSON & JON PANKAKE*

We'll forego the Editors' Column this month, folks, and urge you to hurry right on through this issue and on to LSR #25, our Special Big Protest Issue! In passing through these pages, however, please pay particular attention to any pleas for subscriptions and money; they come right from the heart, folks, and, after all, three bucks won't kill any of you! See you next month.

Readers whose subscriptions run out with this issue will find an "X" marked in the box to the lower right. Three dollars will bring you 12 more nifty issues. LSR, 3220 Park Av. S., Mpls. 7.

\* \* \* RECORD REVIEWS \* \* \*

BRITAIN'S MOST POPULAR FOLKSINGERS ...

ROBIN HALL AND JIMMIE MacGREGOR: TWO HEIDS ARE BETTER THAN YIN (Monitor 365)

These two fresh-voiced young Caledonians, described by some as the "Scots Clancy Brothers," are very much in the mainstream of the British folksong revival, purveying with professionalism and musical flair traditional British tunes to modern audiences. Like Ewan MacColl, they arrange their material for contemporary taste with banjo, mandolin, concertina, and guitar accompaniments, although their singing exhibits much modern influence (the "croony" tendencies of the renditions of the pretty airs such as YE BANKS AND BRAES and WILD MOUNTAIN THYME), and they neither attempt nor seem capable of MacColl's level of musical creativity and artistry. Still, the gusto of their singing and the worthiness of their repertoire merits them a hearing by American audiences interested in British folksong. The album's standout performance, a waltzy, harmonized DAVY FAA, may well indicate the form in which the ancient Scots ballads will survive in our time.

(Editors)

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THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY JOHN ESTES  
(Delmar 603)

Here is probably the greatest of the blues rediscoveries which have come thick and fast in the last few years. Sleepy John Estes, singer-guitarist on a great string of Victor and Decca records in the '20's and '30's, had long been presumed dead, but was recently found very much alive (along with his old harp man, Hammie Nixon) in Tennessee, and Bob Koester has, with just pride, been presenting him in concert and, now, on records.

Sleepy John and Hammie appear on Delmar in a program of twelve blues, including their biggest hit, SOMEDAY BABY (a song which has pervaded the repertoire right down to Lightnin' Slim). Estes is not perhaps as vigorous as he once was, but his strongest point, his fantastically emotional, half-choked voice, comes out better than ever on this LP. Try MARRIED WOMAN, DEATH VALLEY, DROP DOWN MAMA, YOU GOT TO GO -- try anything. No singer ever got so deeply involved in his singing and yet came out so genuine, so free of cheap sentimentality.

This first album does have a bug or two. The use of the famous ragtime pianist Knocky Parker on four numbers was an experiment that just didn't work out: his style is just a bit too breezy for Estes' rich pathos, and on BUDDY BROWN, he is

altogether out of it. The other eight tracks, however, are near perfection.

Sleepy John deserves a long and prosperous career for his new audience. To book him and Hammie (and Yank Rachel, who actually sang the ~~STACK O' DOLLARS~~ <sup>Blues</sup> credited to Estes in the Folkways Anthology) or to buy this record (\$4.98), write Koester at 7 West Grand Avenue, Chicago 10, Illinois.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

SIDNEY MAIDEN: BLUES AN' TROUBLE  
(Prestige Bluesville 1035)

Another one of Chris Strachwitz's California blues productions: Maiden, a Louisiana-born singer and harp man, does eleven vocal blues and a fox chase in an unamplified version of the Chicago style of the early '50's (Little Walter, Snooky Pryor, etc.) with K. C. Douglas on guitar. Maiden does his standards well; as usual, the trouble with this Bluesville is with the A&R, not with the artist. Bluesville has many times drowned fine old-style bluesmen in a sea of amplification. Here, they take an artist in a modern style to which amplified sound (or at least a rhythm section) is fairly essential, and they give him only Douglas' subdued guitar for accompaniment. The result is a most unsatisfying record.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JEAN RITCHIE: PRECIOUS MEMORIES  
(Folkways 2427)

In the city folk music renaissance of the last few years, the honest and upright folklorists, folksingers, editors, and collectors have endeavored to present to us in their published works, both printed and recorded, the most valuable and artistic of our American musical heritage. Their very eagerness to give us only the best has resulted, however, in a distorted concept of the music of the traditional singer. Many city folk have been led to believe that country people have no other music than the ancient and mighty ballads and the archaic native instrumental pieces. Those who have been able to examine the complete repertoires of traditional musicians know that this is only very rarely the case. The traditional musician often draws little or no distinction between what scholars define as genuine folk song and other more recent (and sometimes inferior) songs. "A good song is a good song" to his ear, whether it has been handed down in his family for generations or whether he hears it on the jukebox down at the corner store. It is true that many of our finest traditional singers are aware of the value of their oldest songs, and prefer and treasure them accordingly; it is also true that they will sing composed and pop songs with the same zest they

bring to their traditional material, and can lend real artistic magic to the most maudlin and worthless of songs.

Jean Ritchie, who for more than a decade has presented to city audiences one of the finest and purest personal repertoires ever to have been discovered in American folk music, has decided, along with the New Lost City Ramblers, the Greenbriar Boys, Jack Elliott, and others, to "set the record straight," and to begin to perform the meritorious and often artistic non-traditional country and "hillbilly" music that is an integral part of the folk music picture.

OF PRECIOUS MEMORIES, a collection of sentimental and country songs, Jean writes: "...I had, through my own choice of songs, been giving a false impression of folk singing around home. Of course we didn't all sit around from morn to night in Kentucky singing RYDDLES WYSELY EXPOUNDED and THE LASS OF LOCH ROYALE. We did sing those, because we love them; they're part of us and they are beautiful. But we also took in something of everyday life as it mounted up, and we sang of this, too... Fairly often, we sang straight hillbilly, the pop music of the day. It is to set the record straight, to present a truer picture of singing in the southern mountains, that I have come to undertake this program of songs."

Jean's hillbilly numbers are the tearfully lovesick (LITTLE ROSEBUD CASKET, BURY

ME BENEATH THE WILLOW) and bathetic (THE TWO ORPHANS, THE GYPSY'S WARNING, WRECK ON THE HIGHWAY) popular country numbers of the late '20's and early '30's. Most of them are traceable to recordings of Vernon Dalhart, that peerless strummer of heart-strings, although Jean seems to have learned them from her family and neighbors rather than from the records.

It is a point to note, however, that a pop song performed in a pop style is still trash, even in the mouth of a fine traditional singer. It is the folksinger's musical style of performing that gives aesthetic merit to mundane material. Jean, for instance, sings the corny JIM BLAKE with all the sincerity she accords her ancient English ballads, and in the same exquisite manner. It comes off as a moving experience, as do all the other heartburners on the disc. Best of all are the genuine folk songs, sung in a country music context, that Jean has included as a contrast to (and relief from?) the old sentimental songs. THE POOR AND RAMBLIN' BOY, one of Jean's most unrestrained recorded performances, and FAIR BEAUTY BRIGHT are as good as anything she has recorded.

In order to give the album the proper country music sound, it was decided to have Jean accompanied by a string-band. The New Lost City Ramblers, we understand, were originally wanted (what a record that would have been!), but other

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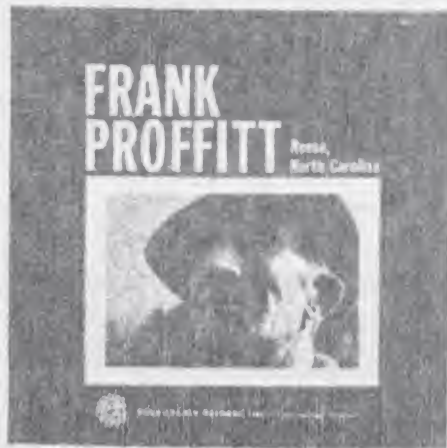
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## NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS



JOHN COHEN  
MIKE SEEGER  
TOM PALEY

FSA-1 -- FRANK PROFFITT



One of America's finest traditional singers and instrumentalists, Frank Proffitt is a tobacco farmer and carpenter who lives near Reese, North Carolina. Accompanying himself on his homemade, fretless banjo, he sings TRIFLING WOMAN, CLUCK OLD HEN, MORNING FAIR, BONNIE JAMES CAMPBELL, LORD RANDALL, HANDSOME MOLLY, REUBEN TRAIN, TOM DOOLEY, I'M GOING BACK TO NORTH CAROLINA, MOONSHINE, RYE WHISKEY, I'LL NEVER GET DRUNK NO MORE, WILD BILL JONES, GYPS OF DAVID, SONG OF A LOST HUNTER (YOUNG HUNTING), SOURWOOD MOUNTAIN and GOING ACROSS THE MOUNTAIN. Recorded by Sandy Paton in Reese, North Carolina. Booklet includes biographical data, notes on the songs and complete texts. Price—\$4.98.

**FOLK-LEGACY RECORDS, INC.**  
HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

commitments made this impossible. The musicians finally chosen as accompanists, city boys Eric Weissberg, Art Rosenbaum, and Marshall Brickman, prove to be the downfall of the album. Their lack of feeling for and understanding of country music is surpassed only by their inability to play together as a group. And although they all have reputations as instrumental craftsmen, if not artists, there are an intolerable number of technical gaucheries heard here: muddy fiddling, bobbled guitar runs, feeble and hesitant banjo picking -- even an out-of-tune guitar on one band. When they run out of musical ideas, they resort to wholly inappropriate bluegrass clichés. As though aware of the ineptness, they remain anonymous; one is never told who is playing what instrument on what song. The accompaniments, in most cases, have been double-recorded, also a disastrous mistake: five or six instruments playing out of time with one another sound even worse than three. The result is a complete mess, with Jean singing clearly out of one long and continuous musical groan: the singer and her accompaniment existing in different and irreconcilable universes.

Whether or not the LSR reader will enjoy this record will depend on his ear's ability to isolate Jean's fine singing from the mad, moaning accompaniment -- no mean listening feat. Although PRECIOUS MEMORIES is a great departure for Jean, and an important attempt

by her to provide a fresh view of her music, it must remain the album that might have been.

DOUG QUATTLEBAUM: SOFTEE MAN BLUES  
(Prestige Bluesville 1065)

Doug Quattlebaum is a 35-year-old Negro who for some time drove a Mister Softee ice cream truck equipped with a P.A. system through the streets of Philadelphia, singing to stir up a crowd at his stops (shades of the medicine show!). Here he sings an impressive catalog of blues standards (and a few originals) in a forceful, melismatic style.

Quattlebaum can pack an emotional wallop (as in TROUBLE IN MIND), but he seems to have trouble coming to grips with the diversity of moods represented by his material; his voice is strident where it should be expressive. His guitar work tends to be rather stiff.

Quattlebaum is worth a hearing for urban blues fans, but he is unable to successfully carry this long program on his own. A band, like those of B. B. King and Junior Parker, might help him considerably.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

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HARRY AND JEANIE WEST: COUNTRY MUSIC BLUE-GRASS STYLE (Prestige International 13049) and ROAMIN' THE BLUE RIDGE WITH JEANIE WEST (Prestige International 13038)

It's probably no surprise that Jeanie, the lead singer on 90 per cent of the songs in these two albums, can no longer conjure up that magic Jean Ritchie-Molly O'Day image, and that her singing now seems lame, lacking almost all of its former power and grace. But it is a surprise that the group backing her, led by husband Harry, has changed from the beautiful simplistic old-timeyness of the Stinson LP's to what D. K. Wilgus' liner notes now call "a new sound... instrumentation expanded in the direction of bluegrass... the new 'old-timey' style." This "new sound" completely lacks both the charm and sweetness of old-timey music as well as the clean, hard drive of modern bluegrass, frequently, as recorded here, sounding more like Chinese gong ceremonies than anything resembling Southern Mountain music; one suspects someone has added sugar to the gas tank.

Although the choice of material is excellent (STORMS ON THE OCEAN, SINGLE GIRL, LITTLE MARGARET, POOR ELLEN SMITH), the West's newest outings are interesting only from a scholastic point-of-view; the "new sound" quickly palls on the casual listener, and the music seems grim and forced. Harry and Jeanie, vocally, are easily the weakest bluegrass or old-timey singers on modern LP.

and the instrumental support merely adds to the confusion. Too bad.

Artie Rose's dobro, which has the effect on most numbers of a piece of chalk squeaking across a blackboard, should be shot at sunrise.

(Editors)

TAMPA RED: DON'T JIVE ME  
(Prestige Bluesville 1043)

Tampa's second album is just like the first: slow, deliberate performances of his own songs and some others, with a subdued electric guitar and an occasional kazoo; Tampa's singing is sincere, sometimes moving, and his guitar playing is accomplished, but there just isn't much spirit left, and these performances are just a bit too tepid for most of today's listeners. What we need is a reissue album of Tampa's great hits in their original performances -- with Georgia Tom, Big Maceo, and the whole crew.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

PEGGY, PENNY, AND BARBARA SEEGER: THE  
THREE SISTERS

(Prestige International 13029)

Giving all three Seeger sisters equal billing on this disc is something of a kindness on the part of Ken Goldstein; the album is clearly Peggy's, and the shy, small, and occasionally off-key

voices of her sisters are always well back from the microphone and in a supporting role.

There is evidence of hurry on both the performances and the group arrangements of many of the songs -- most objectionably on I TRULY UNDERSTAND YOU LOVE ANOTHER MAN, performed in a din and melodically rearranged to the point of being almost unrecognizable.

Despite these shortcomings (and a Seeger attempt at calypso on PEOPLE GO MIND YOUR BUSINESS), this is charming and informal city folk music, very pleasant to hear. The Seeger girls are clearly performing in a reminiscence of their own childhood singing, and their sweet voices and selection of songs (BILLY BARLOW, THE OLD WOMAN AND THE PIG, MY GOOD OLD MAN, IT'S A LIE, FIVE NIGHTS DRUNK, LULLABY MEDLEY, and PLAY-PARTY MEDLEY) will make the disc especially appealing to children. Peggy does some lovely solos, and father Charles Seeger is heard on a band or two.

ODETTA: SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE CRYIN'  
(RCA-Victor 2573)

Odetta's "first blues album" has many characteristics of the usual Odetta hodgepodge: half-baked R&B, pompous and forced Image stuff, grunts and groans, etc. But there are a few tracks on which her style begins to ring true, probably for



the first time on records. These are the ones on which, with a first-class jazz band, she does material associated with the queens of the classic jazz-blues, Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. For a change, her stupendous contralto seems to belong, and if it doesn't replace Bessie's, it does as much justice to her idiom as any other singer since Bessie. She may not be quite sure just what this idiom is (she tries to do IF I HAD WINGS in this style with little success), but when she has the right song (like Ma Rainey's MISERY BLUES), she does well, indeed. Let's hope that before Odetta moves on to another "new challenge" (so say the liner notes), she has time to do an all-Bessie Smith album. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

**JUDY MAYHAN: ROCKIN' THE CRADLE**  
(Horizon 1608)

Judy Mayhan is a coffeehouse singer who "studied opera and classical repertoire from a very early age" and then "became a folksinger." Strike One. Horizon presents her in an album full of sad songs with a glossy black cover. Strike Two. While her superficial style may still see her strike out, Miss Mayhan neatly fouls off Miss Baez's next pitch by playing the dulcimer; she could turn into something if she brightens up her tempos and stops singing I GAVE MY LOVE A CHERRY in G minor. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

(Wherein LSR receives bouquets, dodges brickbats, and unashamedly drops names.)

HAZARD TO PATON ...

To the Editors: One hates to quarrel publicly with a friend -- but a public statement deserves a public response.

Sandy Paton's letter (LSR #22) was excellent, as it dealt with folksinging. But his brief excursion into literary criticism was much less satisfying. He insists that "our college-boy poets cannot hope to create anything comparable (to Ewan MacColl's poetic vision) until they learn the language of the Nebraska farmer, the Maine lobsterman, and the West Virginia coal miner..." The epithet "college-boy" is awfully snide and carries a taint of anti-intellectualism. It's beneath someone as intelligent as Sandy. Even more regrettable is Sandy's apparent dogmatism: he makes a serious literary value judgment based on his insistence upon the validity of a single language tradition: to read him one would think it was the only potent tradition available to a contemporary poet.

This is not true, of course. The college-boy poets that Sandy denigrates also have a tradition, a tradition that includes Homer, Sappho, Tu Fu, Shakespeare, Whitman, Lorca, Eliot, and a vast number of others. It is a great and vigorous tradition, and despite their genuine faults, colleges and

college boys do help preserve and enrich it. (I should add that the tradition preserves and enriches all of us as well, folksingers included.)

So let me remind Sandy that there is more than one tradition of language available to today's poet; greatness has been and is being achieved in all of them. The human community and its means of expression are wonderfully various. Robert Lowell is as valid and as valuable to us as Woody Guthrie is.

With all due respect to Sandy (and plenty is due) I must insist that the folk just aren't the only genuine folks around.

JAMES HAZARD  
Whiting, Indiana

PATON TO HAZARD ...

Dear Jim: Thanks for letting me see your letter to LSR. Your point would be well taken, indeed, had my letter had anything whatsoever to do with America's young poets and the writing of poetry. However, the second sentence of that letter (as printed) shows quite clearly, I think, that I was referring only to the attempt to "produce a new popular music of significance." If Robert Lowell is involved in any such attempt, I must confess that I was unaware of it.

I'll admit that my reference to the young college boys who are trying to "make



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HUNTINGTON, VERMONT

up folk songs" as poets was far from precise usage, but your response to my letter as a whole seems to be based less upon that than upon my failure to consistently qualify the noun "tradition" with the adjective "folk". When I refer to "tradition" in a journal devoted to folksong, I assume that the reader will know that I mean the folk tradition as preserved for us in the many published collections and by such contemporary traditional singers as Frank Proffitt, Horton Barker, Jeannie Robertson, Harry Cox, etc. This is a heritage quite apart from the literary tradition you defend so vigorously, one which has had a surprisingly independent existence and which involves an entirely different aesthetic. That "there is more than one tradition of language available to today's poet" is granted, but I don't see what it has to do with the subject at hand.

Far be it from me, Jim, to make any "excursion into literary criticism". As you know, I am all too aware of my lack of preparation for such a journey. However, if you will promise to bear in mind that you are talking about young poets writing poetry and that I am talking about young folkniks writing folk-type songs, I'd like to re-examine my point and see if we are really in such strong disagreement, after all.

My complaint was twofold: first, that the folknik, generally speaking, had not really

studied the folk tradition he was attempting to re-create and, second, that his work had little or no experiential basis. Let me try to put it into your terms: suppose your young poet had made no study of the literary tradition as presented by "Homer, Sappho, Tu Fu, Shakespeare, etc.", prior to his attempt to use its forms. Suppose his work had no basis in personal experience, that he wrote without having been moved to poetic expression by some memorable event, be it an emotion genuinely felt, an image suddenly conceived, or what have you. I'm willing to bet that the result would be bad, or at least inept, poetry, just as the results of the folknik's ill-prepared attempts are usually bad songs. A lot of gentle ladies who have gone no further into the art of poetry than a reading of Edgar Guest are writing verse for the Poet's Corner of their local newspapers. But is it good poetry? I think not. By the same token, there are a lot of young folkniks who have gone no further into the art of folksong than a listening to the Kingston Trio or Harry Belafonte writing songs for their local folksong clubs. Are they good songs? Again, I think not. In fact, I know damned well they're not.

As for language -- I'm not asking that your young poets write in the vernacular of a given region or occupation (although I would be pleased to read the results of such an effort), but when the folknik

writes a song in which a coal miner is describing the dangers and discomforts of his work, I do feel that he ought to be acquainted, at the very least, with the vernacular of the man in whose mouth he is putting words. Somehow, Jim, I doubt that you advise your students to go out and write poetry without bothering to learn the language in which they are going to write, or the forms they are going to use. I assume from your letter that you expect them to be familiar with the great poets of our literary tradition. If this is so, and you advise them to read and read thoroughly the works of "Homer, Sappho, Tu Fu, etc.", then you are probably as guilty of dogmatism as I am.

Your straw man lies in shreds, Jim.  
Well done. Regards,

SANDY PATON  
Folk-Legacy Records  
Huntington, Vermont

#### HAZARD TO PATON ...

To the Editors: My straw man and I are in shreds. I suppose I deserve to be, although one hates to see such an attractive straw man perish. After all, he was simply an innocent bystander, drawn into the battle because I raged against what Sandy's words (that word "poet") said on the page instead of properly intuiting what he meant when he put them there.

As a pacifist I bitterly regret being

responsible for even a straw man's demise, but happily by the time I reached the second paragraph of Sandy's reply another straw man appeared on the horizon, ready to take his place.

One can't help but feel encouraged by the way Providence in its infinite bounty provides for us all. Contritely,

JAMES HAZARD  
Whiting, Indiana

### THE PARTY LINE ...

Dear Paul and Jon: Last night I came upon a group of students in our lounge, engrossed in Peter, Paul and Mary. I thought it an opportune moment to extract, from the spot it occupies over my heart, LSR #22, and edify their poor, misguided minds and distorted, unsophisticated musical tastes.

I received several deferential smiles and the usual number of superficial inquiries. I suddenly realized that you have been justly rather than unjustly accused (when LITTLE SANDY was but an infant) of "free-wheeling iconoclasm." I speak not of your favorable reviews. I find Barry Hansen's comments particularly well thought out and insightful. But your damnations of representative folkum recordings have indeed fallen into a rut.

I am reminded of the difference between a publication such as THE NATION or THE

NEW REPUBLIC and communist propaganda. Volumes of the latter are handed out on street-corners all over France every day. But little of what one can get for the asking is worth reading. The strict party line is applied to each new issue, like a rigid formula: if one has read what the Party has to say about capitalist imperialism, with a little imagination he could have predicted what it would say about de Gaulle's referendum. The Party's stand is emphatic and sincere, but always anti- and unchanged.

In much the same way, a review such as the one which appeared in #22 of Peter, Paul and Mary is of little use to us disciples. For you refuse to apply any of the criteria by which potentially valuable folk records are adjudged so, in order to pertinently and thus effectively expose the avalidity of "the other stuff." Frank Proffitt is "a banjo player of considerable savvy," and his "simple, slow style" has a "basic charm." These are excellent reasons why his music should receive attention, and it will by aficionados who value "basic charm" in a folk singer.

But the acquaintance of the vast majority of people with folk music is "underdeveloped." They must be led by slow, painful steps to Frank Proffitt, or his equivalent if their impressionable tastes lie with the blues or some other genre. They won't even read commendations of unknown folksingers until mature condemnations of groups with

whom they are familiar have convinced them that a set of legitimate standards exist by which both good and bad folk music can be judged. Then and only then will they appreciate the fact, not so obvious as LSR seems to think, that the enthusiasm of certain groups is "atrocious, artificially canned, and commercial," while the charms of some singers are "basic." Presuming we "purists" do in fact have a cause to further, the uninitiated as well as the initiated must be addressed maturely.

DAVE BARNUM  
Stanford-in-France  
Tours; France

Dear P & J: ...I would like to ask for a "more learned" type of criticism in your reviews; in short, more valid reasons for your likes and dislikes among discs...

MIKE SHERRICK  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Editors' Note: Are we getting soft-headed, folks? Comments would be welcomed.

THE LIFE FORCE ...

Dear Sirs: ...Thank you...for putting out a magazine that has helped my taste and appreciation for things folk to grow immeasurably and thusly to having my whole life significantly enriched...Sincerely,

HERBERT HAMMER  
Los Angeles, Calif.

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

FURRY LEWIS: BACK ON MY FEET AGAIN and DONE CHANGED MY MIND  
(Prestige Bluesville 1036 and 1037)

FRANK PROFFITT (Folk-Legacy FSA-1)  
JOSEPH ABLE TRIVETT (Folk-Legacy FSA-2)  
EDNA RITCHIE (Folk-Legacy FSA-3)  
FLEMING BROWN (Folk-Legacy FSI-1)  
RICHARD CHASE TELLS THREE "JACK" TALES FROM THE SOUTHERN APPALACHIANS (Folk-Legacy FTA-1)

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THE LILLY BROTHERS: FOLK SONGS FROM THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS (Folkways 2433)

REVEREND GARY DAVIS: SAY NO TO THE DEVIL  
(Prestige Bluesville 1049)

THE PHILO GLEE AND MANDOLIN SOCIETY  
(University of Illinois Campus Folksong Club 101) Available for \$5.00 from University of Illinois Campus Folksong Club, Champaign, Illinois.

# OLD TIME MUSIC

AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S, Part 2 (2359)



*Tom Coroneil Ashley*

*Photo by John Cohen*

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# OLD TIME MUSIC

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**THE LITTLE SANDY  
REVIEW**  
POETRY ROOM



**ON OUR COVER...** for this month's SPECIAL BIG PROTEST ISSUE is a fine World War I action print. The reason for this is twofold: 1) it provides an advance jibe for all the Folk Process and East Coast BROADSIDE people to throw at us; they can all point out how far behind the times we are with our WW I bi-planes; and 2) it seems to us just as silly as most of the songs these aforementioned Protesty people write. If any of you are still with us (we hope we have a few friends left), please read the editorial starting on page 3. Cover print is from CINEMA.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

*By JON PARKER & PAUL NELSON*

Folk-Lyric Records, 1945 Bay Street, Baton Rouge 2, La., Harry Oster's great record company, has made an outstanding offer to all LSR readers. Dr. Oster offers any five albums in his catalog (continued on page 21)

READERS WHOSE SUBSCRIPTIONS RUN OUT WITH THIS ISSUE WILL FIND AN "X" MARKED IN THE BOX TO THE LOWER RIGHT. THREE DOLLARS WILL BRING YOU 12 MORE NIFTY ISSUES. LSR, 3220 PARK AV. S., MPLS. 7. RESUBSCRIBE TODAY.

## P-FOR-PROTEST

"Wheel Go Round. If a wheel goes around I call that a revolution. The wheel went around, the wheel went around and I felt it help me. I felt my wheel when it went around and when it helped you. And this is why I stand here flat-footed and say -- I like my revolution."

--Woody Guthrie

"Double your pleasure! Double your fun! With Doublemint, Doublemint, Doublemint Gum!"

--TV commercial

"There's this magazine cover, and it shows this kid getting his first haircut you know and a dog is licking his hand and his mother is crying and it's Saturday night in the old home town and people are dancing outside in the streets and the Liberty Bell is ringing, and, uh, did I miss anything?"

--Dwight Macdonald quoting Mort Sahl on Norman Rockwell

"Dear Editors: Thanks very much for your mention of BROADSIDE...But we are a little puzzled as to why you dismiss us as just 'one of those P-for-Protesty things,' especially when you use so many of your pages (see LSR #22) praising a number of the songwriters we publish: Bob Dylan, Woody Guthrie, Peter La Farge, etc. We would suggest that it reflects an un-

resolved contradiction in your own approach to so-called 'protest' songs. Actually we are against labelling songs as this and that; a song is a song. But accepting the differentiation, we find... Woody Guthrie seems to be your most-loved hero, yet the largest and most important section of his work consists of protest songs, the very kind...you deplore. One can start...(and)...go on to several hundred Guthrie songs...Even THIS LAND is basically a protest song...In this connection, it is interesting to note that the only worthy song your reviewer found in 'Protesty' GAZETTE #2 was Guthrie's THE DYING MINER, an especially powerful protest...The contradiction is compounded in the...6½ pages of praise for Bob Dylan. You highly commend Bob for having adopted Guthrie as his musical and songwriting mentor. You say that Dylan's songwriting efforts 'are easily the best...since Guthrie.' You predict he may become as great...At the same time you counsel Dylan to discontinue trying his hand at the very kind of songs on which Guthrie's greatness rests. In your article you warn Dylan that the future is 'full of dangers.' We would suggest that one of these dangers is the mental confusion he'd risk if he stopped and tried seriously to make some sense out of all this conflicting advice. Another thing: you single out IRA HAYES as the only worthwhile track on Peter

La Farge's Columbia album. Yet IRA HAYES is one of the bitterest protest songs to appear in recent years...We'd like to point out that we published IRA HAYES last summer. We've also printed... (other La Farge songs)...BROADSIDE was probably the first to publish Bob Dylan... In our newest issue we have a rediscovered Woody Guthrie song...We admit that a good deal of our material isn't --yet-- on a plane we would wish; it certainly isn't --yet -- comparable in quality to similar songwriting...in the British Isles. We do not hold ourselves responsible for this state of affairs; but to explain why would require another essay...Sincerely,"

--Letter from Sis Cunningham,  
Editor, BROADSIDE, New York City

"You rah, rah, ----- High School! You rah,  
rah, ----- High School! Rah! Rah! Rah!"  
--High school football cheer

"Their prevalent theme is frustration; the hero is either defeated by society or reduced by it to a negative conformity. What has vanished is the positive concept...Modern heroes die sadly in the dark; they 'go gently into that good night,' a pitiful spectacle which has bred...an appetite for pathos that amounts to an addiction."

--Kenneth Tynan on Social Drama

"There is little music and less imagination..., but...(the)...slogans are correct."

--Nat Hentoff on Bill McAdoo

"In a way it is as embarrassing to see a movie Come Right Out Against Anti-Semitism as it would be to see a movie Come Right Out Against torturing children."

--James Agee on "message" movies

"Folklorists tell us that folksingers have long regarded their songs not only as storehouses of traditional thought, but also as creative means of communication, able to absorb the singers' daily thoughts and impressions and to thus produce new songs on contemporary themes. This holds true for the modern day singers of city and country, and new 'folk' songs concerning the news and ideas of the day are produced at an unbelievable rate. The ones that find their way onto records and into print are largely topical and primarily from amateur and professional city singers. These topical songs are greeted with extremes of enthusiasm and apathy by the folk song audience. On the one hand are the faddists who reject anything traditional as having little relationship to them in their urban, mechanized world, and whose sole interest seems to be listening to and composing songs concerning the problems of coffee house singers, sit-in crusaders, the threat

of nuclear destruction, the high cost of living, etc. On the other hand are the purists, who hold folk song to be a genuine art, with tradition dictating the rules of subject matter and stylistic treatment. These latter enthusiasts, however concerned they may be with contemporary social problems, find the use of traditional music as a vehicle for sloganeering and protest as distasteful and silly as, say, a Mozart fan would find a Ban-the-Bomb-slanted symphony composed on Mozart's musical patterns."

--LSR

"Perhaps the saddest thing is that the young people who embrace these Protesty songs actually think they have something to do with folk music..."

--Bob Dahle

Quite the thorny problem, this matter of protest. As one can see from the above quotations; all of them, in their own way, relevant; there seems to be a great deal of disagreement over the relative merits and demerits of Thou Dost Protest Too Much. How, for instance, can one deny the power and genius inherent in the works of Woody Guthrie and Aunt Molly Jackson? Yet, in the same breath, how can one condone the sappy and idiotic simple-mindedness found in the majority of the songs printed in the East Coast BROADSIDE and in parts of SING OUT!?. One can't, has to be the

answer to both questions.

The quandary isn't nearly so murky and unsolvable if we rather ignominiously treat the field of protest song as a sort of Jekyll-Hyde schizophrenic, one-half a mixture of frat boy "poet" (eager to impress the girls and get his name in print) and professional axe-grinder for the Cause, the other half a true genre artist in the folk idiom. Since LSR #14-15, we have called the Guthrie-Jackson group (which would sometimes include Ewan MacColl, Peggy Seeger, and Bob Dylan), protest (and folk music), and the frat boy-Cause syndrome (Marrs, Turner, Cunningham, etc., and, at times, sadly, Pete Seeger, Malvina Reynolds, and Bill McAdoo) and the songs they propagate, P-for-Protest (the capital P representing, among other things, Pretentious, Portentous, and Ponderous: not folk music, not true protest song, but rather an opiate of the Masses, who cannot, for the life of them, understand or accept protest unless it is presented, like a castrated, humorless nada, in watered-down SATURDAY EVENING POST-READER'S DIGEST style; P-for-Protest is bourgeois, or what Dwight Macdonald would call Masscult or kitsch, protest; folkum protest, if you will).

Although we may feel as strongly about the problems of the day as the most dedicated Crusader, we also feel that the basic nature of folk song and folk-

type songs, with their simplicity, intimacy, and immediacy, is more potentially suited to the more personal problems of mankind; to the interior ethos rather than the great social and political movements of the macrocosm. Woody and Aunt Molly, being both folk and artists, knew this, and did not exceed the boundaries of folk song. The new breed of boyos, being neither folk nor artists, alas, apparently wouldn't recognize either folk music or folk style if it were walking along beside them in a Peace March.

This new class of naive idealists-folkniks romanticizing for never-never utopias and too-clever propagandists working for professional Freedom borrows from the sources it knows best: the Muck Rakers of the 1930s, the television commercial with its asinine jingles, the pep fest, the Sousa march, the football cheer. Although their slogans may be Holier Than Thou, their methods of presentation are as crude as their models. Paul Goodman writes in THE NEW REPUBLIC (February 9, 1963) that "only...the ads... exploit...(to the fullest)...the formal possibilities of the TV medium: montage; combinations of photography, graphics, speech, noise, and music; variety and novelty of expression...They are tight in structure and concise in statement...the programs...(are merely there to fill in space)...and hold passive attention...(between the ads)." P-for-Protest has gone a disgusting one-up on even this absurdity: they have eliminated the program

altogether; nothing remains but the ad: every line must score a touchdown (You rah, rah World Peace!). It's rather like stating the moral over and over again, but leaving out the story: an exact reversal of Guthrie's method. He always gives us the story, in warm, human terms, but rarely bothers tacking on a moral, since, if the story is any good, we should be able to detect the "message" between the lines (implication a la a good Hemingway short story) anyway. The new breed doesn't credit us with this kind of brains; they have to keep hitting us over the head with Ponderous, crushing couplets so we'll get the Point:

"We shall win, we shall not fail;  
Peace on Earth will still prevail!"  
(From Jerry Atinsky's PEACE MARCH  
SONG, BROADSIDE #5.)

The fake-biblical prose is designed, we suppose, to give Universal Significance; too bad, all the Capital Letters in the World don't seem to Help: it still oratorically sounds like a college pep fest led by Elmer Gantry. The only visible Point is that on the top of the songwriter's head.

If one can speak, metaphorically, of folk song as a gigantic iceberg, with only the aural performances of present generations emerging from the water, and the vast eons of tradition shifting

solidly in their icy vaults beneath the surface (like great, ambiguous Moby Dicks hidden in the deep sea), it seems fair to compare present-day P-for-Protest song to a shallow pond with only a thin coating of fragile, cracked, misconstrued ice covering it. The Protest songwriter, all pink with cold, dons his none-too-trusty skates, and, since he hasn't learned a thing from his acknowledged instructors, promptly falls flat on his BROADSIDE (not with a bang, but with a whimper). Under he goes, but, lo, instead of getting soaking wet, he finds there's nothing beneath the surface at all, not even a (newton) minnow. All he has to break his plunge is a pile of weak irony, sentimental question-begging, feeble generalizations, newspaper cliches, and political slogans. But, then, perhaps with his motives of fear, guilt, and anxiety, he shouldn't be out on the ice in the first place.

Occasionally someone like Pete Seeger (who champions the work of both Protesteer and protester) tries to climb the iceberg by digging his skates deep into it. The result is disquietingly comical (like a flea trying to whip an elephant). Here is what Seeger inflicts on the McPeake Family version of WILL YE GO, LASSIE, GO?:

"O summertime is coming and the  
leaves are sweet returning  
But those flowers of peace  
It's for them I'm really yearning

Will they bloom?", etc.

(From Pete Seeger's THE FLOWERS OF  
PEACE, BROADSIDE #3.)

This sort of thing is like pasting a Ban-the-Bomb label on MONA LISA's forehead: it not only harms the original, but, in this improper context, makes the slogan, too, seem little more than ridiculous.

We wouldn't object so much to this vast (read: half-vast) P-for-Protest movement if anybody connected with it had even a smidgin of honest-to-goodness, non-antiseptic, life-like talent (Malvina Reynolds and Bob Dylan don't count here: when they write for BROADSIDE, they produce the same Formula excretion as, say, Gil Turner; yet, when they write other types of songs, which BROADSIDE probably wouldn't be interested in, they do very well; unfortunately, Pete Seeger has never been much of a songwriter). But, in place of talent, we get a sort of reverse-Norman Rockwell Formula for Protest in which the key words are Negro, Bomb, Brotherhood, Shelter, Black and White Together, Capitalist, Politician, Win, Fight, Boss, Worker, Freedom, etc. (Try writing your own BROADSIDE song by using this Formula; it shouldn't take you over five minutes.) Here are some random examples of the level of "songs" such a Formula spawns:



"I  
TOLD  
THAT  
STUPID  
MAN OF  
MINE  
TO

SEND TO THE ODE COMPANY, 5433 NORTH BROAD-  
WAY, BOULDER, COLO., FOR THEIR FREE BANJO  
CATALOG! SO WHAT DOES HE DO! HE BUYS ME  
A BOOK OF POETRY ABOUT GRECIAN URNS!"



"NEED A LITTLE INSPIRATION, MEN? MY KID  
SENT ME A PROTEST SONG FROM COLLEGE."

"I sit at my desk in Washington  
In front of a large machine  
More viscious than Adolph Hitler  
More deadly than strychnine"  
(From Enoch Kent's THE BUTTON  
PUSHER, BROADSIDE #8.)

Perhaps what the Protesteer needs more  
than anything else is a rhyming dictionary.  
Or:

"Old Mother Hubbard slammed the  
door of her cupboard.  
And then went out marching for Peace.  
She knew that the whistle  
of rocket and missile  
Would mean all eating would cease."  
(From Maurice Sugar's MODERN MOTHER  
GOOSE, BROADSIDE #4.)

Or one that defies description:

"Now mother, don't flap, there's no  
need for distress  
That marcher has left me  
his name and address  
And if we win, though a baby there'll be  
He won't have to march  
like his dada and me."  
(From Alex Comfort's GO LIMP,  
BROADSIDE #5.)

Who would have the audacity to say that  
the writers of the preceding songs have  
learned enough from Woody Guthrie to be

worthy of even sharpening his pencil? Indeed, we can almost picture the way in which these songs must be honed out for Mass consumption: somewhere, in a misty utopia where all Men are Brothers, there are no Bombs, etc., there is a huge BROADSIDE factory where (like the Newhart joke) thousands and thousands of monkeys sit chained to typewriters, the theory being that if this goes on long enough, maybe one of them will write THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND. "I think we've got something here!," says a gruff, gnarled old pro who has spent his life Fighting. "Let's see: 'This... land...is...your...qxkz!'"

(It would be well to remember that while WWG is the Hero of protest-culture, he is also the Victim of Protest-Masscult, having been, to quote a famous folklorist, "cruelly used" and, later, "discarded." One well-known bigwig of P even went so far as to say that "99 per cent of Woody's songs are trash.")

If the gist of our argument against the Protesty song is, by and large, that it is neither true protest nor true song (one may also add that such noble topics as world peace, world war, and international brotherhood deserve far more artistry and effort than the hack, ritualized treatment they get from the writers of BROADSIDE; such roaring incompetence only cheapens and makes burlesques out of otherwise serious subjects), we have a bigger quarrel with its publishers:

1) BROADSIDE does a great disservice to the young songwriters (John Koerner is the best one we know) who are trying to write pure folk music; it implies, by printing almost nothing that isn't Formularized and slanted, that all new songs written today, are Protest.

2) More important, it is never a good idea to spread mediocrity, like so much manure, over the country, denying all forms of critical evaluation by simply stating, as Cunningham & Company do in their first issue, that "the only way to find out if a song is good is to give it wide circulation." Perhaps; but then we should all start eating garbage (common sense be hanged!), since the only way we could tell if it was any good would be to eat some for a while to see if we took to it.

Let us quote from Dwight Macdonald (from the Winter 1962-63 FILM QUARTERLY) concerning Cinema 16 and the New American Cinema (the Pretentious boys of the film world): "...The general...(idea)...is always easy to be charitable about; it's only when the specific is in question that the problems arise...the...approach is encouraging only to the untalented, who should firmly be discouraged, and is depressing and disorienting to the gifted...the brighter pupils are discouraged because they are lost in the ruck of mediocrity...What we need is more birth-control in every branch of art." Macdonald also states (correctly, we think) in AGAINST THE AMERICAN GRAIN: "An idea



doesn't exist apart from the words (and music) that express it. Style is not an envelope enclosing a message; the envelope is the message."

...So, from the giant oaks of protest, we are now producing tiny acorns of whining self-pity. To think that by spreading more acorns carelessly around, instead of planting a few carefully in solid, deep soil, we can grow oak trees again is, to us, a major misconception.

William Faulkner believed that long after the last bomb had fallen, and the last great social cause forgotten, the problems of the human heart would still exist. The words of his Nobel speech are applicable to young songwriters: "Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear...

There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: when will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about...He must learn them again...Until he relearns these things, he will write as though he stood alone and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man...I believe that man will not only endure: he will prevail...The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail."  
(Editors)

(EDITORS' COLUMN, continued from page 2) for the remarkably low price of \$15.00. Most readers have already received a complete F-L catalog in the mail, so there's no need to elaborate here except to say that Folk-Lyric has put out some of the best folk music recorded during the last few years. Newest releases are albums by Gary Davis, Jesse Fuller, Sylvia Mars, and Snuffy Jenkins. Any reader who did not receive a catalog and would like to take advantage of Dr. Oster's offer can write directly to Folk-Lyric (address on page 2); they will send out a catalog by return mail ... There will soon be a Volume Four of Folkways' Anthology of American Folk Music ... Bob Dylan's second Columbia album is due at the end of February ... Here's another big money-saving offer by yet another F-L company. Sandy Paton of Folk-Legacy Records (their entire line was reviewed in LSR #23, named CURRENT AND CHOICE in #24) and LSR combine to offer the following:

- 1) 12-issue sub. to LSR, all available back issues, one Folk-Legacy album of your choice; regular \$13.50 value, only \$8.00.
- 2) 12-issue sub. to LSR, one Folk-Legacy album of your choice; regular \$8.00 value, only \$6.00.
- 3) 12-issue sub. to LSR, all available back issues, all five Folk-Legacy albums; regular \$33.50 value, only \$20.00.
- 4) 12-issue sub. to LSR, all five Folk-Legacy albums; regular \$28.00 value, only \$18.00.

Regular LSR subscribers may take advantage of the low Folk-Legacy prices by simply ordering another 12-issue subscription. (No risks involved: we're NOT going to go out of business!) Make all checks payable to LSR, 3220 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis 7, Minnesota; allow two weeks for delivery; add 10 per cent to foreign orders ... The renowned Wedgely Todd is now playing in coffee houses around the Harvard University area.... CORRECTION: In LSR #24, page 5, Barry Hansen, in his review of THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY JOHN ESTES, states that the song Yank Rachel sings in the Folkways Anthology (where it is credited to Estes) is STACK O' DOLLARS. It is actually EXPRESSMAN BLUES ... Old-timey 78's for sale by LSR include a mint-condition 4-78rpm Brunswick album, LISTEN TO OUR STORY, edited by Alan Lomax. This rare set includes LADY GAY by Buell Kazee, PRETTY POLLY by Doc Boggs, THE DEATH OF JOHN HENRY and ROCK ABOUT MY SARO JANE by Uncle Dave Macon, STACKERLEE by Furry Lewis, THE DERBY RAM by Bascom Lamar Lunsford, and two others. Guaranteed excellent condition, complete with booklet. Sale price: \$25.00. Also, two classic 78's, DOWN IN THE WILLOW GARDEN (by Wade Mainer-Zeke Morris) b/w WORRIED MAN BLUES (by the Carter Family) and CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN DEER RACE (by Uncle Dave Macon) b/w EAST VIRGINIA BLUES (by the Carter Family); each disc \$10.00; both in excellent condition ... See you next month, folks.

## SUBSCRIPTIONS-BACK ISSUES-AD RATES

SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION OFFER: Get a regular 12-issue subscription plus all available back issues (#5-6-7-8-9-10-11-13-20-23-24) for only \$5.75. Regular \$8.50 value. OTHERWISE: 12-issue subscription for \$3.00; 24-issue subscription for \$6.00. (Same amounts for foreign subscriptions.) All available back issues are 50 cents each. One complete file of LSR's (#1-25) available for \$25.00. AD RATES: \$25.00 per page; \$15.00 per half-page. Circulation: 550 copies. WRITE: THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW, 3220 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis 7, Minnesota. LSR is edited by Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson. Barry Hansen is blues reviewer. Dave Glover is contributing blues correspondent. Doris Nelson is in charge of subscriptions, layout, and advertising. Wedgely Todd is all-around good egg.

## ADDITIONAL RECORDS AND RECORD CHATTER (\*denotes LP's to be reviewed in LSR.)

- \*RAISE A RUCKUS AND HAVE A HOOTENANNY WITH ALAN LOMAX AND THE DUPREE FAMILY (Kapp 1316) Lomax in a folkum LP.
- \*Bill Monroe: THE FATHER OF BLUE GRASS MUSIC (RCA-Camden) The best Bill Monroe album on the market: reissues from 1940-41. Only \$1.98.
- \*Pete Seeger: THE BITTER AND THE SWEET (Columbia 1916) Lots of 12-string guitar.

\*Frank Hamilton and Valucha: THE WORLD OF FRANK AND VALUCHA (Philips 200-058)

\*Stephen Addiss and Bill Crofut: WORLD TOUR WITH FOLK SONGS (Folkways 2405)

\*OLD TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S, Part Two (Folkways 2359) Tom Ashley, Doc Watson, Clint Howard, Fred Price, Gaither Carlton, Arnold Watson; and the original Carolina Tar Heels, Doc Walsh and Garley Foster!

\*SONGS OF THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, Volume Two (Folkways 5437) One song by Woody.

\*Barbara Dane: WHEN I WAS A YOUNG GIRL (Horizon 1602) Tom Paley accompanies on guitar and banjo.

\*The New Lost City Ramblers: AMERICAN MOONSHINE AND PROHIBITION (Folkways 5263)

Paley, Cohen, and Seeger sing and play THE OLD HOME BREW, PROHIBITION IS A FAILURE, THE TEETOTALS, WHISKEY SELLER, KENTUCKY BOOTLEGGERS, AL SMITH FOR PRESIDENT, GOODBYE OLD BOOZE, MOONSHINER, THE INTOXICATED RAT, DRUNKARD'S HICCUPS, I SAW A MAN AT THE CLOSE OF DAY, VIRGINIA BOOTLEGGERS, DRUNKEN DRIVER, BOOTLEGGERS'S STORY, DOWN TO THE STILL HOUSE TO GET A LITTLE CIDER, I'VE STILL GOT 99, and WRECK ON THE HIGHWAY.

\*The Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem: THE BOYS WON'T LEAVE THE GIRLS ALONE (Columbia 1909) and THE CLANCY BROTHERS AT CARNEGIE HALL (Columbia)

\*Cisco Houston: I AIN'T GOT NO HOME (Vanguard 9107) A 17-song program recorded about a month before his death.

\*AN INTRODUCTION TO GOSPEL SONG (RBF 5) Old 78's compiled and edited by Sam B. Charters.

\*REVIVAL IN BRITAIN (Folkways 8728) Edited by Ewan MacColl. Presents some of the new songwriters who have appeared on the British folk music scene.

\*Stringbean: MORE OF THAT RARE OLD TIME BANJO PICKIN' AND SINGIN' (Starday 179)

\*Ernest V. Stoneman and the Stoneman Family: BLUEGRASS CHAMPS (Starday 200)

\*Ernest Stoneman, Kilby Snow, and Neriah and Kenneth Benfield: MOUNTAIN MUSIC PLAYED ON THE AUTOHARP (Folkways 2365) Recorded by Mike Seeger.

\*THE JUPITER BOOK OF BALLADS (Folkways 9890) Spoken, sung by Isla Cameron, others.

\*Derek Lamb: SHE WAS POOR BUT SHE WAS HONEST (Folkways 8707) London music hall.

\*Wallace House: SAM SMALL, ALBERT RAMSBOTTOM AND UTHERS (Folkways 9899) English dialect stories.

\*AMERICAN HISTORY IN BALLAD AND SONG, Volume Two (Folkways 5802) A 3-LP educational set from Folkways albums.

\*DING DONG DOLLAR (Folkways 5444) Anti-Polaris and Scottish Republican songs.

\*MUSICAL SCORE FROM THE FILM "WHALER OUT OF NEW BEDFORD" AND OTHER SONGS OF THE WHALING ERA (Folkways 3850) Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger on the film score; Ewan, Peggy, and A. L. Lloyd on the flip side.

\*Peter, Paul and Mary: (MOVING) (Warner Bros. 1473)

\*Margaret Barry and Michael Gorman: THE BLARNEY STONE (Prestige Irish 35001)

\*Delia Murphy: THE QUEEN OF CONNEMARA (Prestige Irish 35002)

\*Mickey and Mary Carton: THE IMMIGRANT IRISH BOY (Prestige Irish 35003)

\*JOAN BAEZ IN CONCERT (Vanguard 9112)

\*JACKIE WASHINGTON (Vanguard 9110)

\*Jean Redpath will have a second record on Elektra.

\*The Rooftop Singers: WALK RIGHT IN! (Vanguard 9123) The best folkum LP we've ever heard.

\*The Blue Sky Boys: A TREASURY OF RARE SONGS FROM THE PAST (Starday 205) Reissues.

\*Tom Kines: AN IRISHMAN IN NORTH AMERICAY (Folkways 3522)

\*John Allison: WITCHES AND WAR-WHOOPS (Folkways 5211) Early New England songs.

\*Paul Clayton: DULCIMER SONGS AND SOLOS (Folkways 3571)

\*Mike Seeger: OLD TIME COUNTRY MUSIC (Folkways 2325) His first solo album.

\*FOLK MUSIC OF WASHINGTON SQUARE (Folkways 2353) "Field" recorded.

#### FAN LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dear Sirs: You guys can go to hell!  
Thank you,

(UNSIGNED)

Chicago, Ill.

Editors' Note: It's wonderful to be loved.

## CURRENT AND CHOICE

PEGGY, PENNY, AND BARBARA SEEGER: THE THREE SISTERS (Prestige International 13029)

Charming and informal city folk music, very pleasant to hear. The album is quite clearly Peggy's.

THE LEGEND OF SLEEPY JOHN ESTES (Delmar 603)

The greatest of the blues rediscoveries; Estes' fantastically emotional, half-choked voice comes out better than ever on this LP, despite an out-of-it Knocky Parker on four bands. Available for \$5.00 from Bob Koester, Delmar Records, 7 West Grand Avenue, Chicago 10, Ill.

JEAN RITCHIE: PRECIOUS MEMORIES (Folkways 2427)

Although largely an unsatisfying LP because of the atrocious instrumental backing of Eric Weissberg, Art Rosenbaum, and Marshall Brickman; Jean's attempt to "set the record straight" by performing artistic non-traditional and "hillbilly" songs is still a must simply because it's by Jean. What a record it could have been had the Ramblers or Clarence Ashley's group backed her!

SUBSCRIBE NOW AS LSR's #26 and #27 WILL BE OUT SOON; BOTH TOGETHER; AND 40 PAGES EACH. ONE OF THEM WILL BE THE PRESTIGE 12-LP LCMAX ISSUE. SEE YOU NEXT MONTH.



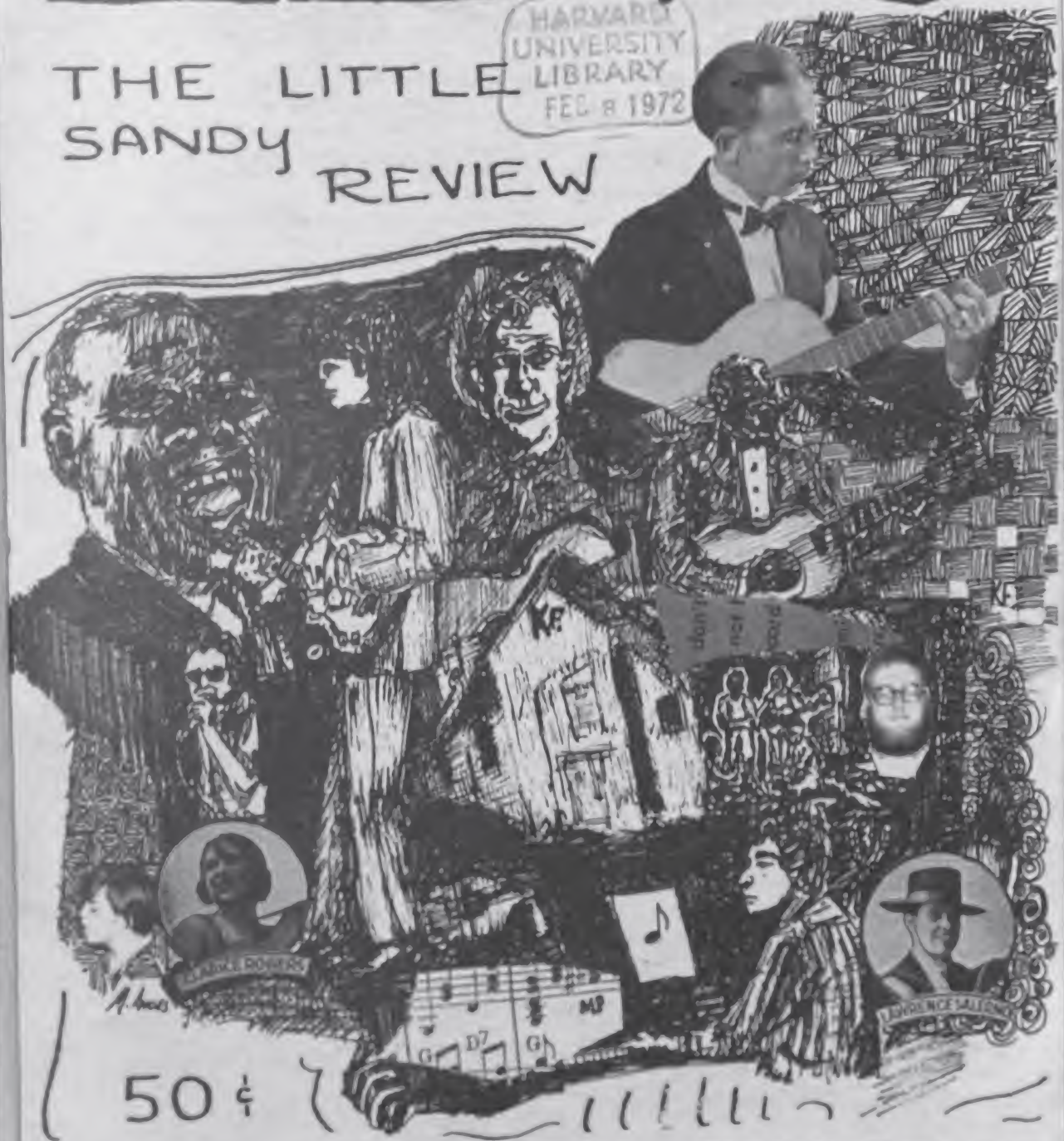
<sup>A</sup>  
The 200.5 Poetry Room

# LSR

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2

THE LITTLE  
SANDY  
REVIEW

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RECORD REVIEWS and COMMENTARY

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# LSR

the little sandy review

Published several times yearly at 525 $\frac{1}{2}$  Grand Blvd. Venice, Calif. 90291  
BARRY HANSEN, editor and publisher.

Vol. 2, No. 2 (November 1966)

Cover drawing: Matthew  
printed in the hills of echo park, los angeles, at de rasha litho

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anyway, just to leave no room for doubting.

§ Our cover was drew by Matthew Andes. Matt play  
rite Sunset Strip rock group, THE WESTERN UNION  
nals written by vocalists Jay Ferguson and Mike  
a good many folk blues, often with Matt playing  
brother Mark is as solid a bass player as you  
Bruce, an R&B veteran from the East, plays drums

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country music whose articles have appeared in  
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a note on the marvelous traditional singer V  
old-time guitar and fiddle player as well as

§ A few good words for good happenings around  
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L.S.R. 525 $\frac{1}{2}$  GRAND BL

JOHN FAHEY: THE GREAT SAN BERNADINO BIRTHDAY PARTY AND OTHER EXCURSIONS  
(Takoma C 1003)

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§ Our cover was drew by Matthew Andes. Matt plays lead guitar in our favorite Sunset Strip rock group, THE WESTERN UNION. They specialize in originals written by vocalists Jay Ferguson and Mike Fondellear; but they also do a good many folk blues, often with Matt playing bottleneck guitar. Matt's brother Mark is as solid a bass player as you'll find on the Strip; Dennis Bruce, an R&B veteran from the East, plays drums. We'll keep you posted.

§ Introducing our other contributors this issue: see the country section for some fine reviews by Michael L. Bass, who has a sizable collection of old-time music on discs and field tapes, and now is on the staff of the Ash Grove; and Norman Cohen, also a record collector, and a prominent writer on country music whose articles have appeared in magazines ranging from the Journal of American Folklore to Hoedown. Graham Wickham, who contributed a note on the marvelous traditional singer Vird Robertson, is an active old-time guitar and fiddle player as well as a fine collector.

§ A few good words for good happenings around the globe. WASHINGTON, D.C.: A gift from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc. will enable the Library of Congress Archive of Folksong to transfer 15,000 recordings—about half the collection—to magnetic tape. JOHANNESBURG, South Africa: Mrs. Estelle Orlin has set up a unique "Folk Reference Center" where, for a nominal membership fee, students may use that country's largest collection of American folk music books and records. 802 New Carlington, cor. Claim & Caroline Streets, Hillbrow, Johannesburg. SEATTLE: The Seattle Folklore Society has been organized to sponsor concerts by traditional performers. The address is c/o John Ullman, 2818 Fairview East, Seattle, Wash. 98102.

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L.S.R. 525½ GRAND BL. VENICE, CA 90291

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After this issue went to press we received the sad news of the death of John S. Hurt, in Grenada, Miss. on Nov. 2, 1966, after a heart attack.

Through the pettiness of others, John was robbed of the happy musical career he so richly deserved. It is doubly tragic that his death came at a moment when fulfillment seemed finally at hand.

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BARRY HANSEN, editor

Vol. 2, No. 2 (November)  
printed in the hills

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We've tried to make  
give the reader some  
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§ In response to  
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Bruce, an R&F

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ventional piece recorded the same summer. A well-known Washington church organist, under the pseudonym "Flea", joins John for a deliciously parallelistic WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN. Al Wilson lends his Indian veena to an overlong but still delightful SAIL AWAY LADIES. GUITAR EXCURSION INTO THE UNKNOWN is the sole surviving example of a musical path Fahey chose not to take. An eclectic bunch of Faheyiana, this side will, like Side 1, appeal mainly to those who know Fahey well from earlier issues. The Takoma engineers, faced with problems similar to those faced by people remastering old Paramounts, did their work well.

BM

IN THE SPIRIT, vols. 1 and 2 (Origin OJL-12, OJL-13)

Having established itself as the premier blues reissue company, OJL now stakes its claim to similar ranking in the Negro religious music area. These LP's primarily cover two aspects of this area, singing-guitar soloists from Mississippi and medium-size groups associated with the Church of God in Christ.

The Mississippi items are by Booker White, Charlie Patton, Skip James and Blind Willie Davis.

Booker White's pieces closely rival Blind Willie Johnson's best. Like Johnson's, they are bottleneck pieces in open D, modal in conception with no chord changes. The bottleneck is not as involved as Blind Willie's, but White's surging thumb on the open bass strings creates a rhythmic undertow which even Blind Willie could not equal. Excellent antiphonal vocal is supplied by an unidentified female who, like Memphis Minnie and Bertha Lee Patton, sings with the sharp, cutting edge favored in the Delta area women singers. In later recordings, Annie Mae McDowell and Mary Williams were also to sing in this manner, the antithesis of the melodic, dulcet tones of Angeline Johnson.

Even better are the two duets by Charlie and Bertha Lee Patton. In my opinion, only DARK WAS THE NIGHT by Blind Willie tops them for overall excellence in the religious area. They are a spine-shivering sample of a three-way "pseudo-unison" between the Patton voices and Charlie's bottleneck guitar, all of which caress the same melody, but with slight, tantalizing differences in conception. In OH DEATH each chorus ends with an exact vocal unison articulating a neat rhythmic phrase which effectively contrasts with the looser unison that precedes. TROUBLED 'BOUT MY MOTHER features rapid vocal convolutions by both Pattons on the first phrase ending of each chorus, which is extended to allow room for the excitement to develop. Charlie does two without Bertha, but these do not even approach the duets or the White cuts. One regrets the omission of JESUS IS A DYING-BED MAKER, easily Patton's finest solo spiritual recording.

Blind Willie Davis is a ragged, churning bottleneck man from South Mississippi who is primitive and effective, but Skip James' religious recording for Paramount is insignificant compared to his greatest-of-all blues discs.

The Church of God in Christ groups are stomping, shouting aggregations ranging from the very good (McIntorah and Edwards) to the good (Elder Richard Bryant, Rev. F.W. McGee) to the fair (Elder Curry) to the poor (Holy Ghost Sanctified Singers, Blind Roosevelt Graves). I don't feel this style has the musical interest of the great soloists. I'll take good bottleneck over a noisy, enthusiastic group anytime. You may disagree.

Related is the jazz-oriented Rev. D. C. Rice group, featuring a bad trumpeter (complete with the nanny-goat vibrato then favored) and a trombonist to whom intonation was a distant rumor. This group loses big.

Other, smaller groups appear in this collection. Sister Cally Fancy's cut features unison singing and harmonica with an intriguing bottleneck harmony. Blind Mamie Forehand sings and rings a rather psychedelic toy bell while her husband lays down a really first-rate (even by this collection's

standards) bottleneck guitar background. Mother McCallum's pieces are pleasant bottleneck items, but not in a class with the two above-mentioned groups. Duckett & Norwood are pleasant finger-pickers, but not of great significance. And, last in the small-group category, we have a peculiar selection by William & Versey Smith in which the female vocalist sounds like someone from Folkways' African ethnic albums.

Other soloists in this album are Blind Willie Johnson (unfortunately doing a real dog tune); Blind Joe Taggart (excellent executor of Blind Willie's unique picking style...who recorded before Johnson!); Washington Phillips (who plays pleasantly upon the dulcicola, a psaltery-type instrument in sound) and finally Alfred G. Karnes (a white Kentuckian who plays a driving slap-style guitar unlike anything I have ever heard, Negro or white):

Each of the two albums has 1 White, 1 Patton, 1 Patton & Lee, 1 Phillips, 1 Bryant, etc. Thus one is as good as the other. This is an insidious means adopted by QJL to force the customer to buy both. However, I expect little grumbling considering the overall quality of these releases, which are easily the finest Negro religious collections extant.

recommended to anyone with any interest in this area of American folk music.

- Al Wilson

#### SKIP JAMES - TODAY! (Vanguard VRS-9219)

Skip James' 1931 recordings are, for me, the most impressive of the "classic period" of 1926-31, and for this reason his rediscovery seemed to be the most promising of all. Unfortunately, this promise has been fulfilled only in part, despite the fact that his physical control of voice and guitar has not appreciably deteriorated with increasing age. This is because one essential of any great music is now lacking in his work, namely the vital inner necessity to produce music. In this he can be vividly contrasted with Son House, who despite considerable loss of technical dexterity due to age remains an exciting performer. This is because his commitment to music when performing remains all-consuming to a degree seldom encountered in a bluesman his age, or indeed of any age, and because his voice remains in superb shape to deliver the goods, although his guitar playing no longer can do so.

Skip's LP output consists of this recording, the Melodeon, and four cuts on THE BLUES AT NEWPORT - Vol. II (Vanguard VRS-9181). And it is significant that, despite the presence of floundering and outright blunders in the guitar work, the Newport cuts are the best. For they were done a scant week or two after he resumed his career, and are animated by a real interest in playing which was to fade away even as his guitar technique became more assured. On the Melodeon LP James, sick and weary, limps lifelessly through eight cuts—and with scarcely a flaw in the guitar work!

This new Vanguard LP is definitely superior to the hapless Melodeon, and is beautifully recorded, but is still basically a lackluster, spiritless affair, two manifestations of the performer's tedium being particularly evident. First, his unusually high voice, once an ethereal sound with a real cutting edge (it's partially there on the Newport cuts), is here a kind of effeminate crooning with all of the gentility of John Hurt but none of the charm. Secondly, the tempos on at least half these songs are painfully slow, and occasionally get even slower towards the finish. These faults are most evident in MY GAL—long, lifeless and insipid. His piano playing on this album is totally lacking in the unconventional features which have made it, in the past, different and interesting.

The best pieces are the least momentous, the light-hearted and frivolous items like I'M SO GLAD and LOOK DOWN THE ROAD, which feature delightfully fleet fingerpicking and breezy vocals. It is the weightier material, including some of his greatest classics of 1931 (like HARD TIMES, CYPRESS GROVE, CHEEKY BALL, and SPECIAL RIDER), which are the weakest cuts. One

wonders if, lacking the original recordings, one would find these compositions at all notable, so undistinguished is their performance here. If you want new Skip James, buy the Newport album. Its four James cuts contain much more of interest than the twelve included here.

- Al Wilson

MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT - TODAY! (Vanguard VRS-9220)

It is with great joy that I see that John Hurt has somehow escaped the contractual entanglements of his former "manager", Mr. Tom Hoskins. It was due to Hoskins that no records of Hurt have been made since his former Piedmont issues. Hopefully Vanguard will give us more of John in the future, for he seems to have lost none of his ability since he made his Okeh records in 1929.

This excellently recorded album is certainly proof of that. The sound is better than on the Piedmonts. The selection of songs is far superior to that of the second Piedmont record, Worried Blues, and slightly exceeds that of his first album, Folk Songs and Blues. John knows hundreds of songs, and I hope that Vanguard will make many more of them available to us.

Some of the Piedmont songs are duplicated here: TALKING CASSY, CANDY MAN, LOUIS COLLINS and SPIKE DRIVER'S BLUES. The middle two are played a trifle more slowly than on the Piedmonts, perhaps for the best since there are fewer mistakes. TALKING CASSY also sounds much better than it did on Piedmont.

The spiritual BEULAH LAND (a version of DO LORD REMEMBER ME, a song many of us used to sing at summer camp) is well done. IF YOU DON'T WANT ME, BABY adequately demonstrates that John can play blues. COFFEE BLUES is a variant of 'BOUT A SPOONFUL, known to practically every old songster and bluesman.

Most of John's stanzas are traditional and occur on other commercial and field-collected recordings. PAY DAY is an excellent example of this; Henry Thomas' 1927 Vocalion recording (entitled SHANTY BLUES, currently available on Origin OJL-3) may have been the source for John's version, which is beautiful. I'M SATISFIED is a delightful song in a happy lighter vein. MAKE ME A PALLET ON THE FLOOR has the same tune and guitar part as John's AIN'T NO TELLING (a 1928 recording not currently available); it is excellently performed—as is most everything on this album.

CORINNA, CORINNA is perhaps the weakest cut on this record. It suffers from something, I know not what.

A 4 or 4½ star album, this Vanguard set suffers only from a lack of informative notes regarding the songs and their origin, bibliographical and discographical information. Not to mention a discussion of where John Hurt fits into the Negro (and white) music traditions in the United States. Nat Hentoff's brief and stupid notes only make a reference to the fact that John "is not a raw, harsh chronicler of the human condition in the manner of many Mississippi shaped blues story-tellers." What the hell is a "blues story-teller" anyway, Nat? And who was one? Hentoff's explanation of what Hurt is supposedly trying to tell us in his songs is equally ridiculous, but somewhat amusing. But nobody reads record notes anyway so who cares. The record is great! (if you like songsters like I do). Someone even made sure that John's guitar was in tune.

John's singing suffers not from a sense of the dramatic but because it is so low in pitch. He frequently misses the pitch he intends to sing, but his quiet subtlety and great guitar cancel that out. Buy this record so they'll make some more of them.

John Fabey

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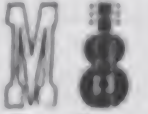
RARE BLUES OF THE TWENTIES (Historical Jazz 1, 2, 4)

The first two of these reissue LP's consist primarily of female city blues of the 1920's with a couple of well-known country singers represented in addition. According to Paul Burgess, Jr., whose newspaper review of these albums comprise the notes to Volume 1, "this is some of the most vital music made in a period (1926-31) characterized by vitality of performance. . .Hound Head Henry, Blind Richard Yates, Georgia Tom, Memphis Minnie and St. Louis Bessie. . .ring a bell. . .with bluesophiles who tremble in anticipation at the mention of their august names". This is a perfectly ludicrous assertion, particularly in the instance of the Hound Head, the mention of whose name is more likely to result in a complete lack of detectable emotion. It is true only of Georgia Tom, for one might well "tremble in anticipation" upon recalling his vast and rapid recorded output. His IT'S TIGHT LIKE THAT, a huge seller, was probably the most influential bad record ever released for the race market of the 1920's; its light, "peppy" rhythms and artless double-entendre doing more to influence the prevailing style into a shallower, more commercial approach in country blues than any other single release. This record, appropriately, is now available on Volume 1 of this series.

Memphis Minnie, a middling-type country singer, seems of gigantic stature when compared with the rest of albums 1 and 2, which consist mostly of second-rate vocalists in a style (female city blues of the 1920's) in which the first-raters were on the whole rather dull. Seldom have more terrible pianists appeared on a single LP as on either of these. The above comments also apply to side 1 of number 4. Bessie Jackson and Coletha Simpson are, in fact, the only female vocalists who emerge in this group as distinctive, substantial performers.

Side 2 of Number 4, however, plunges us into the country idiom with two sides each by Leadbelly, Charlie Lincoln, and the Memphis Sanctified Singers. These, while preferable to the preceding, are still of less interest than most reissue LP's, save for CHAIN GANG TROUBLE by Lincoln. This last is an excellent country blues side with a distinctive eight-bar melody and an agreeable atmosphere of subdued wrath. However, Side 2 is marred by the inclusion of BIRD SLATZ (sic) by Stovepipe #1 and Davy Crockett, an example of tonal putrefaction in which the twelve tones of the musical scale, from which the most exalted musical masterpieces have been constructed, are here abused and humiliated by a stovepiper. There is no possible justification for this perfectly valid piece of kitchen equipment to be utilized in a musical context, for its wheezing bleats are exceedingly unpleasant tonally, and moreover the instrument apparently entails horrendous difficulties in the area of intonation. I can only conclude that the performers (and aficionados) of this group, and those like it, are relatively unconcerned with these factors when they produce (or listen to) music. Too bad.

If you are very fond of girl singers of the 1920's, you'll probably want these recordings. Otherwise they will rank as just about the most worthless reissues available, or even conceivable. - Al Wilson

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ROBERT PETE  
WILLIAMS ~ his  
life and music

BY  
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WILSON

SECOND OF 2 PARTS

Robert Pete's harmonic conception is a feature even more unique than his combination of technical finesse and primitive approach, or his emphasis on improvisation. His three favorite keys are E, A and D (standard tuning), and in the first two he plays in the minor (actually Dorian mode, usually) mode on nearly all selections. In the third, D, his main chord has no third at all; such modality as can be ascertained results from the fleeting notes up the neck, usually minor, but in some pieces major, which linger in the memory when the third-less root position chord is being played. When he plays in open G tuning in the key of D the same situation occurs. When he plays in open G, open D, or in G or C (standard tuning), he uses the major (actually Mixolydian mode, usually) mode. Finally, in B (standard), his playing consists of melodic figures in the treble and bass in the minor—set against the light drone of the tonic and a minor sixth (the second and third strings).

His conception is nearly always of the modal (one-chord) nature, whether the mode (chord) be major or minor in a given piece, with occasional vague allusions to the IV and even less common and more vague allusions to the V. Exceptions are the key of D (standard) where a full IV<sup>7</sup> and V<sup>7</sup> melt into the hollow D chord with telling effect, and open G where the IV and V are used whimsically in the major key.

Almost all blues by other artists fall into the major-key category, in which minor thirds are plentiful but are dissonances which never appear in the cadential chord. Thus Robert Pete's use of the major in the keys of open G, open D, and C & G (standard) is quite typical in this regard. Nearly all of the small remainder of blues by other artists left fall into the intriguing "hollow" tonality described above, a tonality employed by Robert Pete in D (standard) and in open G tuning played in D. The other chief exponent of this tonality is Skip James, whose avoidance of the third in his cadential chords in D minor tuning was directly responsible for the eerie, mystical quality so often commented on by blues lovers, and often misinterpreted as an "Oriental" or "minor" mode. Much of Robert Pete's very finest work is in this tonality, and ranks with Skip's 1931 Paramounts at or near the top of the entire blues heap in general excellence.

Along with D (standard) his two favorite keys, as noted above, are E and A, in which he invariably employs the minor triad in nearly all songs. This is his most unique feature; Robert Pete, alone in the history of recorded blues, plays in minor keys extensively, using this tonality over 50% of the time. And in the key of B the light droning of the minor sixth (in place of the usual major sixth) results in a complete minor (Aeolian) mode.

Rhythmically, Robert Pete is instantly recognizable by his rapid-fire delivery of staccato notes at fast tempo (over half his blues are fast). My biggest surprise in watching him play for the first time was that he used the thumb and only one finger—I could have sworn from the intricacy of his records that he used two. Furthermore, the finger often plays a very secondary role, for his thumb roves all over the six strings. On his solos high on the top two strings it is his thumb that often does most of the picking. At slower tempos the staccato attack alternates, song by song, with a more flowing one.

Vocally, Williams (not surprisingly!) is also worlds apart from the vast majority of the blues field. Here again, improvisation plays a key role; his melodies consist of quick, angular phrases which cover a much wider range than is usual. His is a vibrato-less voice with a harsh, cutting edge all of which gives most of his performances in A minor and E minor an unrelenting flavor ranging from cold fury to the nearly morbid. And yet he often surprises with a minor-key performance poignant rather than raging, or a major-key performance of utter charm and gentility.

Textually, Williams alternates between relatively worked-out lyrics and a completely spontaneous stream-of-consciousness approach in which the lines often do not rhyme. In between he uses a great storehouse of traditional lyrics which pop in and out of various pieces more or less at random. All blues singers I have spoken to generally start the composing process with a set of words and proceed from there—except Robert Pete Williams, who generally fiddles with the guitar part and later comes up with a set of words. Nonetheless, even his spontaneous words often fit the piece with the ease of conversation, and he has at least two textual classics to his credit. These are the spontaneous PRISONER'S TALKING BLUES and the worked-out I'VE GROWN SO UGLY, the latter dealing quite bluntly with the ravages of age on personal appearance.

Having mentioned those factors which make Robert Pete's music interesting, one must now mention its great deficiency—an inevitable one. It is the uneven nature of music of any type which relies on improvisation, a process which is conducive to moments both exciting and dull, depending on the musician's inspiration or lack of it at any given time. It was thus at the Ash Grove, where he was often good, often excellent, and often no better than fair. It is thus on his recordings, which contain some of the greatest blues ever recorded, but which for consistency do not match certain lesser (but still top-notch) blues artists who are more conservative and reliable in their recording efforts. Also worth mentioning are mis-frettings resulting from rapid-fire performance of the unplanned, and sloppy playing resulting in the hitting of undesirable open strings along with the correct note. A good example of this is HOBO WORRIED BLUES (Bluesville #1026), a good piece in E major marred by the frequent sounding of the open third string, the conflicting minor third. The sloppy characteristics quite naturally detract considerably from many of the overall performances.

#### ROBERT PETE ON RECORDS

##### Free Again (Bluesville #1026)

This is easily his best album, containing little that is less than good, and at least three masterpieces. I'VE GROWN SO UGLY is both his greatest textual achievement, and the definitive example of Robert Pete's darting, staccato rhythm on fast numbers. DEATH BLUES (like the above, in "hollow" D tonality) is musically a rehash of PRISONER'S TALKING BLUES (see below), and is nearly as good; it is done on a six-string guitar rather than on a twelve, as on the latter. A THOUSAND MILES FROM NOWHERE is Pete's strongest E minor recording, featuring a more driving base than usual for him and some positively freaky singing toward the middle and end which is unlike anything I have ever heard before in blues. The album also includes ROLLING STONE, his one recorded knife song (in open G), and TWO WINGS, the best recorded sample of his work in open G tuning in the key of D. This key has never been used by any other bluesman.

##### Three Prison Blues (Folk-Lyric #FL-109)

Whether due to recording conditions or the performer's mood, this album, like all the Folk-Lyrics, is more quiet and subdued than the brash and colorful Bluesville. Its three masterpieces (all on Side 1) are among the most sensitive, introspective blues ever waxed. LOUISE, in B minor with its light droning minor sixth, is like nothing else anywhere. BLUES

IN ME, in A minor, is quietly, unobtrusively remarkable in the utterly successful free-form phrasing (conversational in nature, it breathes perfectly despite the lack of any structural guidelines), and the delicious lightness of the darting rhythmic undertow. COME HERE BABY, in open G, is a tender pearl in (for Robert Pete) the rarely employed major tonality. This piece is marred somewhat by inaccurate guitar tuning (a very rare occurrence in his work—he's one of the best guitar tuners in the blues), but is still thoroughly delightful. Unfortunately, Side 2 is repetitious (all cuts are in E minor) and replete with the listless phrasing of the improviser who is off his form. Hogman Murey's twelve-string accompaniment on two tracks is perfectly atrocious.

Angola Prisoners' Blues (Folk-Lyric #LKS-A-3)

Pete does 5 of the 9 tracks on this anthology. LEVEE CAMP MOAN is a somber reworking in E minor of a levee camp work shout. TALKING PRISONER'S BLUES, that quietest of masterpieces, may be Pete's greatest record (at least he thinks so). Half evocative talking and half magnificent, subdued singing, it is in the "hollow" D tonality. The IV<sup>7</sup> and V<sup>7</sup> chords resolve hauntingly into the third-less D chord in the twelve-string guitar accompaniment.

Angola Prison Spirituals (Folk-Lyric #LKS-A-6)

Williams does 4 of the 11 tracks here. These are extremely fragmented selections, often intriguing, but none match his greatest blues cuts.

Country Negro Jam Sessions (Folk-Lyric #L-111)

Here he does one cut out of 15, backed by Guitar Welch, Barbecue Bob's MISSISSIPPI HEAVY WATER BLUES (his version being very close to the original). This is not one of his most exciting selections.

The Blues at Newport - Volume I (Vanguard VAS-9180)

Robert Pete does three selections on this album, including another LEVEE CAMP MOAN and the memorable MIDNIGHT BOOGIE, Pete's second favorite among his own recordings. It's a stomping boogie in a type of hollow A chord (the major second is prominent) with fractured conventional chord changes and some ambitious, turned-on singing.

\* \* \*

Robert Pete, at 53, is still very much alive musically, and is constantly churning out new musical ideas. While in Los Angeles, for instance, he spent quite a bit of time fiddling with a brand new tuning. It was the key of B (standard)—with the bottom E string tuned down to B! This creativity is a welcome situation, for many of the aging giants (like Son House) have performed their old songs very well but haven't written a new one in thirty years. Others (like Skip James) often sound totally listless and disinterested in music, because they are. But with Robert Pete we encounter the opposite situation; he at times fervently wishes he could quit, for religious reasons, but never succeeds in doing so. He is compelled to return to music, and when he does he quickly proceeds in doing new things and writing new songs. And when his tonsils are removed (they've been bad for years and years), he feels that his singing will be much better, he'll be able to use falsetto again, and may even play the harmonica again. It's nice to have surprises like this in the blues future, for I fear few others are forthcoming.

It is unfortunate, but not surprising, that Robert Pete is woefully unappreciated by today's blues fans. For he is an utterly subtle and unique performer in a field whose fans are, if the truth be known, happiest with the overstated and the familiar. In fact, my friends in modern jazz seem to think much more of him than my blues friends. The former immediately react warily to his intricate, flowing rhythms, whereas the latter are un-

comfortable because this rhythm is not conducive to the compulsive foot-stomping stimulated by a heavier, more regular beat. The former like the improvised vocal lines for their mobility and for their angular, abstract quality, whereas the latter yearn for more conventional melody. The former are not upset by the minor key, the latter are annoyed since their musical world is nearly completely in the major key. The former are delighted with his linear emphasis and his extended improvised lines, whereas the latter want more heavy chords and feel the loose phrasing to be anarchy. For all these reasons the blues fan's attention, not supplied with the familiar landmarks, quickly tends to wander, and becomes uneasy and fidgety.

If any blues singer requires "serious listening" (in the sense this applies to complex classical works), it is Robert Pete. A real effort in this direction by those whose reaction is not immediate may lead to nothing, but it also may lead to a gradual appreciation of music which is not only enjoyable but is also, by its very unique nature, highly refreshing. For, after all, variety is the spice of life!

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CHICAGO/THE BLUES/TODAY! (Vanguard VRS-9216/7/8) (or VSD-79216/7/8, stereo)

It's been an uphill struggle for us electric blues fans the past ten years or so. We've had to face the frowns and snarls from both sides — from whites who thought it sounded too much like rock & roll, from Negroes who thought it didn't sound enough like rock & roll. Now I think the music is beginning to make it (in the eyes of the world, that is). The Rolling Stones drop a few names — and night club owners who never wanted to hire the Howlin' Wolf before now can't afford to. And Vanguard, a firm which sells very few records to middle-aged Negroes and a great many to young whites, has jumped feet first into this middle-aged Negro music, and come out with what is certainly the most ambitious package that has ever dignified such home-grown goods.

The production chores, including all choices of artists and repertoire (A & R) were entrusted to Samuel Charters, who recorded the entire collection in one studio during one short trip to Chicago.

C/TB/T! features seven bands, and one solo artist, from the modern Chicago electric blues idiom. Happily, Vanguard has grouped the cuts by each band together, rather than mixing them up, so that each band has a sort of miniature album to itself. So we'll try to sum up each one, and save the generalizations about the complete set for the end.

Vol. 1 opens with Junior Wells. Save for the drummer, it's the same quartet heard on Delmark, featuring Buddy Guy. And it's pretty much the same kind of sound. Guy's amp is heard at a slightly less genteel volume than on Delmark, but it's still much too soft to give an impression of the live sound of this music. Moreover his playing is not as clean as on Delmark—in fact it's downright sloppy in spots. The music cries out for a second guitar, as Guy appears to waver fitfully between lead and backup parts, never getting a chance to shine in either role. IT HURTS ME TOO has a particularly empty sound, which the bass player valiantly tries to fill up with some unusually full lines. MESSIN' WITH THE KID is the merest skeleton of Junior's hard-driving Chief single of a few years back.

Junior does a remarkable original here, VIETCONG BLUES. It is obviously a sincere reaction to his troubles, but we do wish he had had time to work out the lyrics a little bit more. As it is, it is not easy to tell which "side" he's on—if either.

J. B. Hutto, remembered for some savage blues-band sides on Chance in the mid-1950's (one of these may be heard on Blues Classics BC-8), is now heard with only bass & drums backing up his slide guitar. And the guitar sound is so clean and discreet, that the trio sounds more like an old-time acoustic group than an electric one. Nothing wrong with this, ipso facto; but J.B.'s singing is unquestionably in the full-volume electric idiom, and the music tends to sound like electric music with something missing. Which is exactly what it is.

Hutto's set has all the earmarks of a real rush job. The music is carelessly thrown together, and has neither the freedom of good improvising nor the tightness of good arrangements. MARRIED WOMAN BLUES, a fine passionate piece, gets very sloppy at the end. (Did Vanguard's budget prohibit retakes?) THAT'S THE TRUTH is hardly a song at all, just musicians fooling around erratically in a semi-rock idiom. It's a nervous, exploratory effort, helped not a bit by a wretched tape splice.

Otis Spann, certainly the finest of the younger blues pianists, does five numbers with a drummer. Sonically, these come off much better than any of the band numbers. Three pieces are instrumentals—two boogie woogie pieces which are remarkable examples of cliché-free playing in a conservative style, and S.P. BLUES, a version of VICKSBURG BLUES which is a shade inferior to the one on Testament. The two vocal blues, unfortunately, reveal Spann in such a disastrously hoarse and raspy voice that the listener gets caught up in empathy for the horrible discomforts that must have plagued his respiratory system at the time. You can hardly listen to them as music.

Vol. 2 begins with a Jimmy Cotton group, harp, guitar, piano & drums. It's a bigger, truer sound than anything on Vol. 1, and comes close to being fully acceptable electric music. But why didn't somebody hire a bass?

Cotton's voice and his harp style are similar—plain, not as subtle or as dramatic as Junior Wells, but strong, very strong. COTTON CROP BLUES, LOVE ME OR LEAVE ME, and WEST HELENA BLUES are all slow blues right in the center of the Chicago bag, all with beautiful harp solos. The solo in WEST HELENA is what hippies would call "freaky" - but listen to it on its own terms. Cotton's other two numbers go a bit afield—THE BLUES KEEP FALLING is a revival of Charles Brown's BLACK NIGHT, and some may be amused by Cotton's efforts to mold his big, rough voice to Brown's effete style. ROCKET # 88, a hit for Jackie Brenston's jump band fifteen years ago, is in a Louis-Jordan groove. Neither of these last two numbers is any great piece of music, but both are representative of things these musicians do quite frequently when on stage in their home environment.

All in all the Cotton set is a good evocation of the style of the mid-50's, with the harp playing lead and the guitar subordinate. It swings. But why didn't somebody hire a bass?

Cotton is followed by Otis Rush, whose band provides Vanguard's only example of the full-fledged 1966 Chicago idiom, dominated by flatpick guitar and singing in the B. B. King style. And finally, finally, we get a full-sized five-piece combo.

A & R problems continue to haunt us, though. The sound is not bad; the bass comes socking right over. The guitar is sufficiently prominent, but its tone is too clean, more like jazz electric guitar than like blues, more pleasant than piercing. And there are further, more serious reservations regarding the music itself. Everything is loose and rambling; nothing has the tightness and tension that made Rush's Cobra 45's such highly sought-after collector's items. It's a pity, because the band arrangement of I CAN'T QUIT YOU BABY is much more interesting than the one on Cobra, yet the Cobra is a gutty, fiery piece of music, and this isn't.

Homesick James, Elmore's cousin, plays some driving, elemental things in the Elmore slide-guitar bag, and sings fairly well if less violently than Elmore. Here, though, the A&R work becomes really abysmal. The material is uninspired, to say the least. And the recorded sound is disgusting. The bass (Willie Dixon!) is muddy, the drums are badly distorted, just like on all those 78's. But the guitar has that same pussyfooting sound as on all the other sessions here. SOMEBODY BEEN TALKIN' is well-titled - you can hear somebody talking in the background all the way through it, and on SET A DATE too. As if that weren't enough, the musicians are out of tune. (At least that doesn't happen very often on these records).

On to Volume 3. Johnny Young has all of Side 1, with an entirely different outfit from the one he leads on Arhoolie. This isn't quite such a powerhouse group as the latter, but it gains greatly from the presence of Walter Horton, whose harp playing is a shade less gutty than is Jimmy Cotton's on Arhoolie, but has quite a bit more variety and creativity.

There are four songs with a quartet: guitar, harp, bass & drums. KID MAN BLUES and TIGHTEN UP ON IT feature fine arrangements which just don't come over as well as they might; by now you can guess why. Horton, though, is magnificent on both, especially the latter where he does a beautiful sustained-note background to a vocal chorus. He also shines on the second instrumental chorus to MY BLACK MARK.

Young ventures two mandolin numbers. Horton lays out, and the remaining bass & drums are not nearly as sympathetic as Spann's piano on Arhoolie. The two numbers do provide a contrast between a 1920's style on STEALIN' BACK (this is somewhat dulled by nervous bass & drum playing in modernistic style) and I GOT MINE IN TIME, an average blues in which the mandolin is closer to guitar technique.

Johnny Shines is the most adept of the three slide-guitarists heard in C/TB/T!. He is a real-life friend and disciple of the late Robert Johnson, a much more faithful disciple than Muddy Waters ever was. His guitar is a near carbon-copy of Johnson's, with none of Muddy's extravagance, when Shines wants it to be. And his voice is also well into the Johnson mold, though less cutting.

DYNAFLOW BLUES is nothing less than a new model of Johnson's TERRAPLANE. It's so close that Shines must have listened to the old record recently. The bass & drums get themselves adequately into the duple-rhythm bag without really helping out too much—it's still basically an acoustic sound, and for once the guitar tone isn't too irksome. LAYIN' DOWN MY SHOES AND CLOTHES begins with a tantalizing fragment of Robert guitar, introducing a curious piece in which a vocal in a tremulous style, that seems to go back even before Johnson, peaks out of a routine 1950's electric band track.

BLACK SPIDER BLUES, IF I GET LUCKY, Mr. BOWEEVIL and HEY HEY are more in the usual 1950's bag, and again the weak guitar tone bugs us. Some of these would have been real gems with the right A&R techniques.

There is one piece under Big Walter Horton's name. It's the Shines quartet with Horton, plus Charlie Musselwhite, a young white harp man whose reputation in Chi rivals Butterfield's. Walter and Charlie do a pleasant little jam session on ST. LOUIS BLUES (rechristened ROCKIN' MY BOOGIE).

Well, that's it. Our hats are off to Sam for finding (with much help from locals Bob Koester and Pete Welding) many significant and great bluesmen who had been absent from wax so long they were believed dead. But the resulting albums, which could have been the most important record release of the decade, are instead just a trio of museum pieces which everybody will have to run out and buy, but which nobody will want to play very often. The recordings betray not only inexperience at capturing the living sound of Chicago blues on tape, but a far-reaching lack of rapport with the whole idea of a form of music which has to be tight, organized, and loud to have its full impact. We wonder if Charters, like the blues students of a few years ago, was really afraid of having it sound too much like rock & roll.

Not long ago we might have believed that only producers with long experience in rock music (for instance Chess) were capable of turning out halfway decent records of Chi-blues. Pete Welding changed our minds with one record, the Johnny Young on Arhoolie. So we'll come right out and say it. Vanguard hired the wrong man. BH

#### MUDDY WATERS: THE REAL FOLK BLUES (Chess LP-1501)

This is the second Chess LP to be drawn from Muddy's 100 or so 78 and 45 rpm sides. The earlier LP, The Best of Muddy Waters (LP-1427) contains 1950-54 recordings; this one reissues sides made before and after that period. There are five cuts from Aristocrat, a label the Chess brothers used in the 1940's before going into business under their own name. Three of these (plus another, WALKIN' BLUES, from an early Chess session) feature Muddy and his electric bottleneck guitar, accompanied only by a stand-up bass ("Big" Crawford). WALKIN' BLUES and ROLLIN' AND TUMBLIN' are Robert Johnson songs, with the Johnson sound still very much present, albeit distilled through Muddy's much more extroverted musical personality. The latter cut is fine, but not nearly as wild as the version Muddy did with Baby Face Leroy singing (see Blues Classics BC-8).

Muddy's extravagant bottleneck style is perhaps best evident on the other two with-bass-only cuts, LITTLE GENEVA and CANARY BLIND. Note how Muddy lets the bass do all the rhythmic work, while he plays free-rhythm figures all over the neck. Today it sounds a bit hokey, and it's out of tune, but imagine it against the background of what else was being recorded in 1949. It's kind of the dawn of Bloomfield.

GYPSY WOMAN and SCREAMIN' AND CRYING have this sound plus a piano. Unfortunately it was to be several years before the piano was really integrated into the sound (under the supervision of Otis Spann). Here the piano just drags the whole sound down into the 1949 murk.

The other six cuts on LP-1501 date from 1955 to 1964. The three earlier ones are best: MANNISH BOY (1955), a hilarious answer to Bo Diddley's IM A MAN; JUST TO BE WITH YOU (1956) which is one of those great blues done to a repeated riff in slow tempo, and 40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS (1956) with fine harp. Of the later ones, WALKIN' IN THE PARK (1959) is a trifle, while SAME THING (1964) is a showcase for Muddy the modern showman. Fittingly, the last cut, YOU CAN'T LOSE, has one of his modern-day bottleneck solos, which are just as extravagant as his 1949 ones. Ah, how much tamer they seem today!

On the whole, this album is not quite as strong throughout as THE BEST, but it has many moments of equal quality. Both albums are necessary to an understanding of Muddy's development and that of the Chicago style in general. Incidentally, there is still enough unreissued material on those singles to make an album, maybe even two, that would be superior to either of the ones we have.

OH

#### HOWLIN' WOLF: THE REAL FOLK BLUES (Chess LP-1502)

This set is temporally divided into two parts, four cuts dating from the 1956-59 period, and eight cuts dating from the 1963-65 period. Thus this LP fills in the gaps left by his two previous albums on Chess, since the first one covered the 1951-56 period, and the second one covered the 1959-63 period.

This commendable thoroughness of Chess (noticeable also on the Muddy Waters LP in the "Folk Blues" series, which also fills in similar gaps in his previous LP output) unfortunately is detrimental to this record's overall quality, because the 1956-59 period was a very weak one for the Wolf. Prior to 1959 there is no good improvised lead guitar work to be found on his recordings, or for that matter, on those of any other Chicago group. His effective one-chord groove which relied on tight group unity (MOANIN' IN THE MOONLIGHT, SMOKESTACK LIGHTNING, I ASKED FOR WATER, etc.), and which dispensed with any necessity for a skilled improvising guitarist, had been run into the ground by 1957 and abandoned. Beginning in 1959, Wolf solved the problem by coming up with three great guitarists: Hubert Sumlin (now playing in the new style), Buddy Guy, and occasionally Freddy King. In addition he contributes his own effective, if limited, bottleneck work on two sides. However, the four cuts from the interim period which are used on this LP (NATURE, HATCHEZ BURNING, POOR BOY and SITTING ON TOP OF THE WORLD) are totally devoid of interesting instrumental work, the closest to diverting being the eerie piano on HATCHEZ BURNING which is unfortunately swamped by an endless procession of inside ninth chords (the city blues band cliché) emanating from a woefully mistuned guitar. These four cuts, for me, rank 9 through 12 in the set of 12.

Starting in 1963, it's another story—we have a topnotch lead guitarist in tow. It sounds like Guy, but might be Sumlin who according to Mike Bloomfield does very accurate Guy imitations in addition to his own distinctive style. Nonetheless I'll hold out for Guy, save for TAIL DRAGGER which I venture is Sumlin, and in particular would cite LOUISE as indicating Guy's presence. For in the fifth and sixth measures of the guitar solo, Guy's technically trickiest cliché (here tastefully used) crops up, and I venture that Sumlin (who for all his excellence is rather rudimentary technically) doesn't have the chops to cut this particular lick.

The last two pieces mentioned, and also BUILT FOR COMFORT, are all good samples of blues in the modern style, featuring facile and exciting



improvised single-string lines in the lead guitar, and with saxophones droning out block harmonies in the background. The three most interesting pieces, however, are KILLING FLOOR, OOH BABY HOLD ME, and THREE HUNDRED POUNDS OF JOY, which are essentially cases of Latin rhythms brought to bear on the blues style. Experiments like this usually turn out disastrously in the blues, generally sounding either pretentious or trite, but these three sound quite natural and work out beautifully. However they will really turn you off if your taste in amplified blues runs exclusively along Delta lines (early Muddy, Howlin' Wolf bottleneck and one-chord items, Elmore James) for they will seem like shallow attempts outside what is for you the vital blues tradition.

2 Don't buy this record without listening to it first somewhere, for depending on your background, the recent material may be deemed very interesting—or very decadent. The early material will, in all likelihood, interest nobody. Nonetheless, the Wolf's group, with early Muddy Waters, is the best there has been; for me this new style is perfectly valid, and I therefore recommend this LP's purchase.

- Al Wilson

SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON: THE REAL FOLK BLUES (Chess LP-1503)

Sonny Boy (No. 2), in many unpretentious ways, was a very unusual bluesman. Like Booker White and John Estes, and unlike most blues singers, his lyrics are seldom found in the work of others. This leads one to suppose that more of them are his own original creation than is commonly the case. His identifying feature is the "intensity vibrato", a vibrato which fluctuates in volume while maintaining an exact pitch, which one contrasts with the vastly more common pitch vibrato which consists of a rapid fluctuation of pitch within a small area of the note being sung. The intensity vibrato, a standard harmonica technique, is seldom used by vocalists; Sonny Boy, in using it, thereby achieves an uncanny continuity between his vocal phrases and his harmonica interjections. These factors, along with his intriguing phrasing which is replete with jagged rhythmic constructions and pregnant pauses, make for an unusual assortment of off-beat poetry in his work.

The chief deficiency in this record (as on all of his previous efforts) is that, although the rhythm section is good, his harp is the only effective lead instrumental force in the group. This is in contrast to the variety of instrumental interplay which makes the best Chicago bands what they are (for instance Muddy Waters with Little Walter and Otis Spann, and Howlin' Wolf with Buddy Guy, Hubert Sumlin, or Freddy King). This LP is for me roughly on a par with his other Chess album. Either is a good purchase, but either is also sufficient late Sonny Boy for most collections.

One piece, TRUST MY BABY, should be of great interest to harmonica players. It is in so-called "second position", using the G harp played in G rather than the almost universal D. He plays very effectively in the low register in this position, which is a difficult feat in blues harmonica playing.

- Al Wilson

JUNIOR WELLS' CHICAGO BLUES BAND: HOODOO MAN BLUES (Delmark DJ-9612)

Wells is heard here, as on Volume 1 of the new Chicago set on Vanguard, with a quartet featuring Buddy Guy. (The latter plays here under a pseudonym). Both Wells and Guy are in much better form here than on Vanguard. These cuts are a fine introduction to the redoubtable technique of these two young musicians. Among the many remarkable licks and effects might be mentioned Junior's psychedelic bit at the end of EARLY IN THE MORNING, and Guy's imitation of electric organ tone on the title cut. A couple of peculiarities might also be noted: the musicians are excessively fond of the minor mode (even HOUND DOG is transformed) and Wells favors pompous, drawn-out endings that just don't make it on records.

Vocally, Junior has mixed his old, straightforward style with occasional bits of James Brown, and quite a few bits of grunt-and-groan a la recent Muddy Waters.

Songs come from quite a few sources. Several of Junior's early hits are recreated, not too successfully. SHIPS ON THE OCEAN is an adaptation of Muddy Waters' JUST TO BE WITH YOU. YOU DON'T LOVE ME and YONDER WALL could be called Chi "standards", and HOUND DOG will be even more familiar. Jazzman Kenny Burrell's CHITLIN CON CARNE appears as an instrumental. Most curious is the cut titled GOOD MORNING SCHOOLGIRL, which turns out to be Howlin' Wolf's HOWLIN' FOR MY DARLING, with new lyrics vaguely resembling those of the Sonny Boy Williamson (I) hit whose title is borrowed. With all these gems, it strikes us as being a bit bush to open the album with a shallow "answer" to a recent James Brown hit.

Unfortunately the Delmark sound is, if anything, worse than the Vanguard. Guy is turned down so low that you can just about hear the unamplified sound of his strings coming over an open mike, on top of the sound from his amp. Fine as some of the music is, we think it might have reached greatness had another musician or two been hired, and had the engineers not been quite so leary of a little distortion.

BH

#### JOHNNY YOUNG AND HIS CHICAGO BLUES BAND (Arhoolie F1029)

This LP presents Young in two very different contexts — playing his mandolin, with only Otis Spann's piano for accompaniment, and playing electric guitar with a full-size Chicago band. The mandolin cuts hark back to the 1940's in style; they are blues standards, very well done.

But this record will probably be longer remembered for the magnificent playing on the eight band cuts. The "Chicago Blues Band" is a Muddy Waters crew, with Young replacing Muddy. James Cotton on harp dominates the sound. These musicians have not recorded anything as solid as this since 1957, and it's marvelous to hear that they can still hack it as well as ever. The sound is in every way harder and more gutty than on any of the recent discs under Muddy's name.

Young may not be one of the greats, but vocally and instrumentally he is more than competent. He sings straight, not putting in too much expression. Certainly he avoids the bathos of recent Muddy, but he also misses the cutting edge of the second Sonny Boy Williamson and the soulfulness of Otis Rush. Strong stuff anyway, though. On guitar he stays pretty much in the background, doing the same kind of parts you hear on Chicago discs from the mid-1950's.

We have been complaining for years about how electric blues fares badly on folk labels, at the hands of axr men who don't really like loud music, and engineers who'd eat a Nagra rather than let the guitar amp overmodulate. The old Bluesvilles started a trend that has continued right down through today's Delmark and Vanguard efforts. Elektra's Butterfield sets aren't much better. But the magnificent axr and technical work on this LP should set a standard for years to come. Not only are the musicians at their best and then some, at ease but still tight as a drum, but the sound itself is the finest we have ever heard on any Chicago blues recording, and that includes Chess. A little more presence on the harp might have been desired in spots, but the sound here is so far ahead of that on other labels that it defies petty criticism. Here's two Hall of Fame nominations—for ~~recording~~, the Axr man, and Stu Black, the engineer.

BH

- SUBSCRIBE! -

#### JOHN LEE HOOKER: IT SERVE YOU RIGHT TO SUPPER (Impulse A-9103)

Here we have a curious meeting of Hooker's recent "folk" (God help us) blues style, made to order for the coffeehouses and folk-festivals, and his middle-period romping and stomping approach synthesized by Vee-Jay Records.

The former style is represented by COUNTRY BOY, DECORATION DAY, and IT SERVES YOU RIGHT TO SUFFER, upon which Hooker employs the pretentious hushed vocal approach which infested the JOHN LEE AT NEWPORT abortion on Vee-Jay. Fortunately, it comes out sounding much less offensive here than on the Newport miscue, the album's title piece being about as tasty as possible within this stilted idiom. The latter style is manifested on SHAKE IT BABY, BOTTLE UP AND GO, YOU'RE WRONG, and MONEY, rhythmically infectious items of no great import but which are quite pleasant.

Generally this album is extremely relaxed—and quite enjoyable. This is in great measure due to Hooker's accompaniment, the mainstream jazz musicians Milt Hinton, Panama Francis, and Barry Galbraith, who play bass, drums and guitar respectively. Their light touch and big ears are quite refreshing in comparison with the run of slam-bang drummers and elemental bass players who detract from the recorded efforts of many of Chicago's finest. Impulse is definitely the right label for this record, for its jazz clientele will appreciate this understated accompaniment which many blues band devotees, appreciating volume above all else in drumming, will deem trivial. Particularly attractive is the brush technique on DECORATION DAY and SERVES YOU RIGHT, which superimposes a fleeting 12/8 over Hooker's slow 4/4.

All in all, they help produce the best Hooker album in many years, although Hooker himself is no longer a major blues figure. This record is recommended as a kind of easy-listening blues album if you like Hooker, and if the relaxed rhythmic groove appeals to you. If you find either less than interesting, pass on this recording.

- Al Wilson

THE BUTTERFIELD BLUES BAND: EAST↔WEST (Elektra EKL-315)

Once again Elektra has faced the frightful challenge of producing a record by this greatest of all electric groups. The mortals who run this firm have bravely attempted to manufacture a piece of plastic that will simultaneously represent the group to those who have not heard it, serve as a souvenir for those who have, and enshrine the whole scene for future generations. Their task is made doubly difficult because this group orients itself toward live music, and this music must be recorded as it is. It's not at all like the situation with most rock groups, who have sounds manufactured for them in a studio, then trust to luck for reproducing the sounds on a stage.

In our judgment, Elektra has not succeeded quite so well in recording the Butterband of 1966 as it did in recording that of 1965 (EKL-294). But this deficiency is more than compensated for by the great strides the band itself has made in the past year. This is therefore a better record than the earlier album.

The magnitude of the things this crew does with blues is best shown on the leadoff cut, Robert Johnson's WALKIN' BLUES. Now everybody knows about the fantastic soloists, but what really sets the BBB apart from all competition is its ability to play background figures so tightly that it sounds like one instrument, and so forcefully it sounds like ten. In WALKIN' BLUES the background figure is mostly one repeated note. The whole band is, in essence, being a rhythm section. If only some of the bands who emulate Bloomfield's frisky fingers would have the maturity to play like this, then maybe Butterfield would have some badly needed competition.

Similar techniques are used slightly less stupendously in several more traditional-styled blues sung by Paul. Best of these is the macabre I GOT A MIND TO GIVE UP LIVING, with some fine "building" by the band.

That about does it for the strict blues bag. The rest of the album, two-thirds or so of its surfaces, heads in several directions. There are two rock & roll numbers. GET OUT OF MY LIFE, WOMAN lacks the magic of the Lee Dorsey original, but it is a fine showcase for the piano playing of Mark Naftalin. (Naftalin, barely audible on the first album, has now become a key man in the band's unique "section" sound). The other rocker, MARY, MARY,

was recorded in a Los Angeles rock studio under the supervision of Kandy Sparks Associates. It has a female vocal group. The song is awkward for Butterfield. The recording, which sounded quite vibrant on a demo we heard last spring, has been badly mixed and now sounds muddy. It is the weakest cut on the album.

Elvin Bishop sings one number, as he does each set on stage, in a silky, soft baritone reminiscent of Percy Mayfield (but smoother). It is in an early-50's bag which may be appreciated only by those who are deeply into very old R&B. We certainly appreciate it, especially with Butterfield's harmonica removing all traces of the cocktail lounge.

That leaves us with the two long instrumentals. Neither is exactly a blues, yet they are not readily classifiable in any other way. *WORK SONG* tends to jazz, especially in the jump time the bass & drums fall into towards the end. It has good, roomy breaks by each of the band's four soloists, and culminates with a head arrangement in which the four rotate two-bar solos for some time. (The mental processes involved in playing this passage must be hairy indeed!) This cut as a whole is a good exhibit of the musicians' varying positions vis-a-vis blues style. Bloomfield and McFadden are getting very much into styles of their own, with some extensions of traditional ideas but with a very large share of new ones. Butterfield is the same way, but a bit less far-out. Bishop remains blues-rooted.

The title cut occupies 13 minutes plus on side 2. This is a sample of a kind of thing many guitarists have been doing in rock clubs lately. Loosely known as "ragas", these are long solos, without chord changes or other evidence of conventional form. Here and there a lick will be borrowed from Shankar or Khan, but there is certainly nothing in the sound that any Indian would recognize as being his own brand of music. Bloomfield is a master at these flights of fancy, and about eleven of the thirteen minutes belong to him. His solo is divided into two separate movements, in greatly contrasting moods. The first ("East?") uses quasi-Indian modes. The second ("West?") is a beguiling thing in major, with a long passage in pianissimo, which should convince all doubters that Bloomfield, when he wants to be, is a musician of impeccable taste. (You can't say that of many of his emulators). Unfortunately this piece is marred by an unpardonable goof: the bass is badly out of tune. Now we have never heard Jerome Arnold play in this manner on stage, so must conclude that somebody was not quite on their toes in the studio that fateful day.

The greatest overall fault of this album lies in the recording technique. By no means is this recording as bad as the Vanguard Chicago blues set, but it tends in the same direction—not enough bite to the guitars, not enough oomph to the bass and drums. Turning the volume up does help some, but if Elektra can't make the Butterfield Blues Band sound as good on a record as the average teenage Top 40 crew, then they damn well better go out and get the men who do those Top 40 recordings and bring them in. You just can't get by with folk techniques when you're recording an electric band. The jacket notes, by the way, are a prize exercise in utter futility.

Unfortunate as this may be, the merest shadow of a Butterfield performance is enough to wipe out most of the other sounds in the business. An absolutely essential album.

SM

#### THE BARRY COLLEMAN BLUES BAND (Epic BN 26199)

This LP was made under extremely chaotic circumstances, a week after lead-singer and guitarist Steve Miller quit the group. Epic was being quite unfair to the musicians involved in releasing this travesty, and perhaps we are being unfair to them in reviewing it. But since it's there for all to hear, we should call attention to the superb harp playing of Charlie Musselwhite, and the fine guitar solos of Harvey Mandel, especially on *MEAN OLD SQUID*. Both are major talents in the true Chicago idiom. Clearly this band had the potential for rivalling Butterfield, but this collection (heavy on rockabilly numbers which don't fit the Chi style) is rough listening.

In a small, stone house near the edge of the dry desert town of Boron, California, Vird Robertson, eighty-three-year-old photographer, singer, composer and former cowboy, lives alone.

Having met Vird in Texas, in 1965, at the home of his brother, the famous Fiddling Eck Robertson, I tried unsuccessfully to find him in Boron a year later. But, with my brother Gurdon and Barry Hansen, I located him last July and recorded over forty songs, ballads and stories. Since then he has spent a weekend with me, and the collection of his fine singing and important remembrances has doubled.

As a boy, Vird was not only a local play-party singer, but also played banjo and fiddle, and with his brothers Eck and Quince has provided music for many Huat County (Tex.) dances.

Vird seems to have stopped learning songs around the turn of the century, but since then he has composed some of the finest songs and ballads I have ever heard. Some of his own songs, as well as more traditional songs, will be heard on a forthcoming Takoma album centering on the traditional music of Texas and Oklahoma.



## VIRD ROBERTSON

Traditional  
Texas  
Singer

text  
Graham Wickham

photos  
Gurdon Wickham



OLD TIME FIDDLE CLASSICS (County 507)

This is the third County reissue album devoted to fiddle music, and like its predecessors, provides us with another geographic cross section through the old-time music of the southeastern United States. Most of the artists are familiar to those who have kept up with the various reissues.

North Georgia is well represented by three selections. Lowe Stokes, backed up by Riley Puckett, performs the familiar but always exciting BILLY IN THE LOW GROUND. This was the flip side of the Columbia 78 of SALLY JOHNSON by this duo, reissued on County 501. Those listeners who were electrified by Puckett's guitar on that selection—possibly the finest example of his back-up style on wax—may be a trifle disappointed by this number, but Stokes' beautifully clean fiddling is as precise as ever. Puckett also backs up Clayton McMichen on DONE GONE. Mac's version is a bit flashier than Eck Robertson's early recording of this Irish-sounding fiddle tune. McMichen was perhaps the most versatile of the North Georgia fiddlers, but I can't decide whether the sharpened notes on the "fine" part of the tune are intentional or not. Typical of the North Georgia wildly ebullient string band style is Earl Johnson's I GOT MY WHISKEY FROM ROCKINGHAM—one of the two numbers on the LP with vocals.

For the first time, County dips into the post-depression decade to come up with two beautiful pieces that are stylistically closer to modern bluegrass fiddling than they are to typical pre-depression old-timey fiddling. These are BILL CHEATHAM, by Fiddlin' Arthur Smith (who still fiddles as well as ever), and NEW LOST TRAIN BLUES by Clarence Todd & Ollie Bunn, two members of J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers. The latter number takes Henry Whittier's rather dull harmonica solo LOST TRAIN BLUES and transforms it into an exciting fiddle piece.

Also still fiddling today—and actually better than before—is the West Virginia fiddler, Clark Kessinger, featured on this LP with RACTIME ANNIE. Two Virginia bands, both with Ernest Stoneman, are included: SUNNY HOME IN DAIRIE, with Frank Jenkins on fiddle, is a tune very similar to FREE LITTLE BIRD but in some indescribable way more graceful. The fiddle is backed up by some tasteful banjo picking up and down the neck. JUGAL IN THE COURT, with Kahle Brewer fiddling and Stoneman on guitar, harmonica and vocal, is close to TURKEY IN THE STRAW in melody. This is an example of a band giving equal importance to all three melody instruments—fiddle, banjo, and harmonica. Charlie Bowman, once the champion fiddler of East Tennessee, makes his debut on LP with MOONSHINER AND HIS MONEY, a medley of two vigorous stringband numbers tied together by some rather stilted dialogue. LOST CHILD by the Stripling Brothers (of Alabama) seems to be a variant of BLACK MOUNTAIN RAG, with the fiddle strummed like a mandolin on the "b" part of the tune.

The remaining two numbers, BRILLIANCY MEDLEY by Eck Robertson and Family, and JERELSON CITY RAG by the Roane County Ramblers, have already been reissued—the former on Folkways' anthology and the latter on County 501 (now out of print).

I feel it is my duty to throw a passing barb at County's sheriff, Dave Freeman, for once again providing no liner notes on these potpourri reissues. Freeman's reply—and I can sympathize to an extent—is that the space for liner notes is far too limited to do a decent job, and that brochure notes are financially out of the question. Still, short notes are better than none; witness the notes on County's own Charlie Poole reissues, or on the Victor Vintage reissues, which are quite valuable, brevity notwithstanding.

County Records may be purchased directly from the manufacturer at 307 E. 57th St., New York, NY 10016. He who hesitates may be out of luck, since these records really are limited editions; at this writing both 501 and 502, and maybe more, are already out of print.

- Norman Cohen

PRESENTING THE BLUE SKY BOYS (Capitol T 2453)

Since emerging from their self-imposed retirement of 1951, the Blue Sky Boys have recorded three albums, this outstanding collection being the most recent. Their two earlier LP's, the tasetless TOGETHER AGAIN! (Starday SLP 257) and the slightly better PREGIOUS MEMORIES (Starday JLP 269), through no fault of the performers, suffer from inappropriate material and superfluous added accompaniment. This most recent album makes it quite evident what a tremendous difference a knowledgeable and sympathetic approach to the artist and his material can make in the final musical product. Bill and Earl Bolick were one of the two finest brother duos (along with the Monroe Brothers) of the 1930's; calling themselves the Blue Sky Boys, they were extremely popular with country audiences throughout their recording career of almost fifteen years. Their musical approach consists of beautifully understated and invariably perfect vocal harmonies which are enhanced by an ease of performance belying the exacting precision of their execution. The guitar and mandolin accompaniment is totally appropriate in its relaxed simplicity. And yet (like the more easily recognized Monroe Brothers) theirs is a music of great intensity—a fact often obscured by their very relaxation, but of fundamental importance in a proper understanding of their value. It is too seldom realized that intense music can be relaxed, and is in fact usually preferable when it is so.

The twelve selections on this set, all traditional, have never been previously recorded by the Bolicks. Their choice of texts reveals the same acute sensitivity evident in their musical approach, and these texts are also highly interesting from an academic standpoint. The text of THE UNQUIET GRAVE (Child 78) is notable for its extreme rarity in American tradition and for its exceptional completeness. The other Child ballad on this album, ~~BE~~ MARRY IN TIME (Child 2, THE ELFIN KNIGHT) demonstrates the common tendency of American ballad singers to alter those portions of imported British ballads that deal with the supernatural. In addition, two other pieces, POOR BOY and WHO'S GONNA SHOE YOUR PRETTY LITTLE FEET, contain fragments of Child ballads (numbers 95 and 76). It is unfortunate that annotator Ed Kahn could not (because of space limitations) present his almost indisputable evidence displaying the Negro origins of POOR BOY, which are of great importance in pointing out the discrepancies in present classification methods. In this, the ballad is contrasted to MIDNIGHT SPECIAL and COKINA, COKINA (two other songs on this record) which also appear in both white and Negro tradition, but whose ultimate origin cannot be ascertained from the existing body of evidence. Also of interest are JACK O' DIAMONDS (the Blue Sky Boys' "anthology" of American folk lyric), COTTON MILL COLIC (one of the finest traditional topical songs), and the two popular religious folk songs, OH THOSE TOMBS and WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN.

Ed Kahn's notes are of the same high standard as the music. Undoubtedly the longest to grace the jacket of a major label folksong production, they deal primarily with the songs, inasmuch as the essential biographical data has been extensively dealt with by Archie Green on Camden CAL-797, an earlier Blue Sky Boys reissue. It is difficult to make any concrete criticisms of the recording techniques used, although the incessant pick noise heard throughout the album could have been eliminated without much added trouble. But, minor though it is, the most irritating defect with the production is the terrible choice of the cover photograph and its reproduction. Needless to say, these two flaws should not stand in the way of any person interested in this noteworthy album.

-Michael L. Bass

CHARLIE POOLE AND THE NORTH CAROLINA RAMBLERS (County 505)

This album marks County's first departure from its usual approach of presenting musical potpourris by various old time recording artists. This album concentrates on the work of one of the more influential country string

bands of the 1920's: Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers. Beginning their recording career in 1925, the North Carolina Ramblers met with immediate commercial success and quickly went on to become one of the staple old time bands to be featured on Columbia's early 15000-D hillbilly series. Heavily influenced by the popular music of the period, the Ramblers' approach to their music led to an intricate and exciting string band style that was imitated by a number of other bands from their region. This important reissue puts together, for the first time in one package, twelve sides by this important and popular group.

Although the choice of material is spotty at times, the collection is a good representative document of the band's recorded output, including pieces from both traditional and popular music sources, as well as several items evidently composed by Poole himself. DON'T LET YOUR DEAL GO DOWN (recorded at the first session) and SWEET SIXTEEN show direct ragtime influence, but all the pieces possess a strong ragtime feeling (except for two traditional dance tunes, MOUNTAIN REEL and RICHMOND COTILLION, the instrumental that appears at the beginning of SHOOTIN' CREEK). The ragtime feeling is due to the highly syncopated fiddling, played by two distinct fiddlers employing extremely similar styles, and set off by Poole's choppy finger-style banjo. These are the two elements of the group's easily recognizable sound. Although SWEET SUNNY SOUTH is found in tradition, it is of known authorship. Both TAKE A DRINK ON ME and LEAVING HOME are reworkings of earlier traditional songs which probably stem from Negro sources.

Dave Freeman's notes are accurate and informative, and are especially helpful in straightening out the personnel of the varied musicians who accompanied Poole, although they deal mainly with the recording career of the band and barely touch upon its work in radio and live appearances. But there is the promise of more to come in the form of a full history and discography set for future publication. This will show that the Ramblers also recorded for Paramount and Gennett, but unfortunately none of these sides appear in this collection. Instead, County has seen fit, as it has on a number of other issues, to reissue two pieces already available on LP: WHITE HOUSE BLUES, available since 1952 on the Folkways anthology, and SHOOTIN' CREEK (which was on County 501, now out of print). But aside from these faults, the album is an extremely attractive offer, whether for the serious hillbilly scholar or the many old time country music fans who were probably introduced to several of these tunes by the New Lost City Ramblers' recreations (which seem to lack a certain something in comparison with these originals!)

-Michael L. Bass

#### THE SKILLET LICKERS (County 506)

The only old time string band in Columbia's 15000-D hillbilly series to surpass Charlie Poole and the North Carolina Ramblers in popularity, was a raucous group of North Georgians led by fiddler Gid Tanner, and including two of the finest pioneer country recording artists to appear on discs—guitarist Riley Puckett and fiddler Clayton McMichen. In contrast to the highly intricate instrumental interplay of the North Carolina Ramblers, Gid Tanner and the Skillet Lickers performed in a haphazard, devil-may-care style that has come to be associated with a number of other bands from their native North Georgia. The style is strongly suited to many of the traditional dance tunes common throughout the rural southeast, and the bulk of this collection is comprised of these popular fiddle pieces. This fact taken into consideration, the album is an excellent documentation of a string band's repertoire, and at the same time, it offers the listener a hearty dish of some of the Skillet Lickers' finest waxed efforts.

Particularly outstanding musical efforts include FOUr CENT COTTON, which contains what is perhaps the finest example of early hillbilly back-up guitar in Riley Puckett's extremely complex (both rhythmically and harmonically) accompaniment; the triple fiddle harmonies featured on one of the band's most



interesting dance tunes, SAL'S GONE TO THE CIDER MILL; and their up-tempo version of the British ballad, DEVILISH MARY, always one of my favorites. COTTON EYED JOE, BIG BALL IN TOWN, and NIGGER IN THE WOODPILE are among the other popular fiddle tunes that are included in this set. Riley Puckett's vocal leads on most of the numbers, and Gid Tanner's high falsetto singing, also add to the general feeling of excitement the Skillet Lickers consistently generate. A CORN LICKER STILL IN GEORGIA (Parts 9 & 10 of the fourteen parts in a series of skits written by the band members) gives the listener some insight into the essence of early rural humor, something rarely documented by either commercial recording companies or academic folklorists.

Although such British imports as MOLLY PUT THE KETTLE ON, SOLDIER'S JOY, and LEATHER BRÈCHES made up a significant part of the dance repertoire of the Skillet lickers, as well as most other old time bands, I must take exception to Norm Cohen's statement: "Most traditional American fiddle tunes . . . were brought to this country by settlers from the British Isles." It is still too early to determine which of the hundreds upon hundreds of distinctly different traditional tunes that make up the American fiddler's song-bag are descended from, or have counterparts in, British tradition. The balance of the notes are quite good, though, and in addition to biographies of the band members and a general history of the group, short but excellent headnotes are given for each of the selections. (To my knowledge, the identification of Riley Puckett's birthplace as Alpharetta, Georgia has not been authenticated).

Considering that this is the only currently available LP entirely devoted to this extremely important band (the earlier Folk Song Society of Minnesota LP is out of print) and that at the same time it contains so much plain good music, it is thoroughly recommended. In conjunction with the County Charlie Poole reissue, it gives a comparison of two of the more familiar regional styles to be found in the early recordings of American folk music.

-Michael L. Bass

THE BEATLES: REVOLVER (Capitol T 2576)

The Beatles have been record stars for four years now. (LOVE ME DO, a hit in England, appeared four years ago this month). There is ample evidence in the press that the four gentlemen are growing weary of being The Beatles every second of their lives. They are embarking on various sorts of separate projects, like films that require short haircuts. Their recording future is in doubt, and one major Hollywood executive goes so far as to tell us that the group has officially disbanded. It will be too bad to miss seeing them catch Bing Crosby, the only artist or group to have sold more records than the Beatles. Let no man say, though, that their place in the Hall of Fame is not assured.

The review copy of this disc arrived in the mail the same day that LSR Vol. 2 No. 1 arrived from the printer. Since that time, we've been more or less scooped by our "competition", Crawdaddy, The Los Angeles Times, etc. We no longer feel impelled to shout lengthily from the rooftops about REVOLVER. It has become an old and treasured friend.

Neither will there be much need to analyze it cut by cut. What we have to say about it can come out in generalizations:

- 1) The eleven cuts are in eleven different bags. We don't think any musician in any idiom has ever exhibited such astounding versatility of concept, mood and style.
- 2) Few listeners are going to groove totally in all eleven bags. But the songs and their performances are staggeringly consistent in quality.
- 3) Audacity is the keynote of the album. It's there in a "raga-rock" piece that does less violence to the "raga" side of the hybrid than any others we've heard. It's there in the choice of the instruments, and in the orchestration (a chamber orchestra playing Motown, a brass band that

comes in for two bars, a pear-toned French horn). It's there in the abrupt endings. It's there in the gimmicks, ranging from the ridiculous (the introduction to TAXMAN, side 1 band 1) to the sublime (all of TOMORROW NEVER KNOWS).

4) This is the most psychedelic album ever produced by a Top 40 "rock" group. Nothing else even comes close. Yet only one cut on the album is of the sort generally called "psychedelic" in the trade.

5) There are more than enough subtleties to bear repeated listening. Something new will come out every time. There are even subliminal notes.

We said in the first issue that maybe we would find a rock album worthy of being placed alongside Columbia CL-1654 and County 502. This is it, folks.

BH

DONOVAN: SUNSHINE SUPERMAN (Epic LN 24217); THE REAL DONOVAN (Hickory LP135)

On the Hickory jacket are a series of quotes, which appear purposely chosen to make Donovan out as a conceited ass. In one he says that he had been accused of imitating Dylan before he had ever heard of Dylan. Spontaneous evolution, we suppose.

Cowpies is more like it. But the big question is—why should he get uptight about such accusations. Sure he's been a Dylan follower. Right on his tail all the time. Now, in fact, he's caught up and passed Dylan. SUNSHINE SUPERMAN is a better album than BLONDE ON BLONDE any day of the week.

Donovan's poems are much more accessible to the mind than Dylan's. That undoubtedly means they are less complex. But when poems are being used as lyrics for a song, it is a fairly desirable quality that they be fully intelligible to an audience as the song is sung. Another plus in favor of Donovan's poetry is its wide range of mood and subject matter. Dylan's peevish, pouting dedications to various bohemian females in his life are getting tiresome. Donovan has a fixation too—the psychedelic experience—but it comes out in references, rather than being a monotonous and binding theme for everything that is done. Donovan is still conjuring up gorgeous visual images, verbally, as he did in his classic COLOURS (it's on the Hickory here) but now he's doing it much more elaborately and subtly. These images are expanded skillfully into associated moods connected with people, things, scenes and crowds, like that of the Sunset Strip in L.A. (THE T&P is named after the Strip's classiest jazz joint, where Donovan has worked; and the Sea Witch, a block up the Strip, may have inspired the title and mood of SEASON OF THE WITCH).

But it is the music that most convincingly gives the nod to Donovan over Dylan. Most convincingly. Never on this album are we forced to listen to a man screaming poetry while a band cranks out virtually unrelated music. Donovan is an artful, engaging, musical singer, and his poems are sensitively and effectively set to music. Music which can stand on its feet as music; in fact, some could almost be good instrumentals. (Can one imagine anything more dismal than a Dylan instrumental?)

The variety of the instrumental arrangements is comparable with that of the lyrics. Hard rock on the title song contrasts with a chamber orchestra on the second cut, and there are many shades in between. The sitar is heard frequently.

Less than half the numbers are really in the rock idiom. (The title song and SEASON OF THE WITCH stand out among them). But the rock beat is with us, quietly, all the way. THE FAT ANGEL (a delightful psychedelic item) and FRENCH WHEEL stand out from the quieter lot; both use bongos (remember what bongos are, anybody? You see them in pawnshops) and effectively. One number totally divorced from rock is QUINCY, which owes a lot to ethnic and revival folk music of England.

The Hickory item, a lame-duck set issued after Donovan jumped to Epic, contains most of his old hits plus a few new cuts. It's not bad. One of the new cuts, HAY GYP, is a cute updating of the old answer-back blues song CAN I DO IT FOR YOU. But it is the weakest of the three Hickory albums, and it just isn't in the same class with the monumental new things he does on Epic.

BH

## LSR SUPER-SOUNDS -ALBUMS

THE HAPPENING - Created by Fire and Ice, Ltd. (Capitol ST 2577)

The trouble with psychedelic music is that it has no standards. Excuses like "free expression" can be used to pass off the purest chicanery as great art. This album, usually advertised together with Capitol's (anti-) LSD documentary, represents the crassest imaginable attempt to cash in on the LSD wave. Ah, how beautiful is the hypocrisy of our capitalists!

The first cut consists of an interminable instrumental, in watered-down surfer style. As it plays, several people make asinine comments into the microphone. After while somebody starts to toot a flute, nearly oblivious to the pre-existing band. The second cut has someone uttering supposedly spontaneous strings of mixed metaphors in the deadliest imaginable voice.

We did listen to the record all the way through. We deserve a medal.

AND THEN...ALONG COMES THE ASSOCIATION (Valiant VLS 25002)

A group ever so expertly contrived to be the Beach Boys of the collegiate set. The Weird-but-Clean image. Some of the songs are very fine, and the arrangements make nice use of modal harmonies. But the whole sound is so bland, so slick, so impersonal as to repel serious listening.

THE CYRILE: RED RUBBER BALL (Columbia CL 2544)

More collegiate stuff, in a soft-rock bag similar to the above. But this is much more informal. The songs and the singers sound much more human and less mechanical. Yet the arrangements are every bit as clever and skillful. Quite possibly the best album available in this bag.

THE BYRDS: FIFTH DIMENSION (Columbia CL 2549)

Better than their second album, but still not up to their first. Contains the group's last three singles, plus two folksongs with a sticky string orchestra, and a protest song set to the tune Joan Baez used for SILKIE. The final cut, 2-4-2 FOX TROT (THE LEAN JET SONG), is a despicable piece of lightweight psychedelic trickery.

MEMPHIS GOLD (Stax 710)

A good cross-section of the work of a Memphis studio whose products rival Motown's for R&B supremacy. The key to their success is the impeccable rhythm section—especially the fender bass—of the house band. Otherwise their arrangements are much less adventurous than Motown's. They do however turn out some really peerless classics, like Sam & Dave's HOLD ON I'M COMIN' and Rufus Thomas' WALKING THE DOG. Both are on this album.

THE OTIS REDDING DICTIONARY OF SOUL (Volt 415)

The rhythm section is louder than Redding's voice, through the whole album. That way you can dance, feel the soul a bit, and not notice how wretched Redding's singing really is—thin, hoarse, and with no concept of intonation.

### • SINGLES.

THE BEACH BOYS: Good Vibrations (Capitol 5676). Fantastically inventive.

PAT BOONE: Wish You Were Here, Buddy (Dot 16933). Boone wrote this anti-protest item himself. Very clever, and not a little bit vicious.

LOVE: Stephanie Knows Who (Elektra EK-45608). Their "new" sound, with added sax and harpsichord. Very ambitious and provocative. But the lead singer is so offensively unmusical you can't take the record seriously. Most people won't be able to take it at all.

SONS OF ADAM: Better Man Than I (Decca 31995). Brilliant feedback guitar break.

THE CHICAGO LOOP: She Comes To Me (DynoVoice 226). Bum record. But buy it now—it'll be worth money in 20 years. Listen to the lead guitar at the end.

CHAMBERS BROTHERS: Time Has Come Today (Columbia 4-43816). Hooray for Columbia—they made the first psychedelic soul record! But the real Chambers brothers are better.

BOBBY DARIN: If I Were a Carpenter (Atlantic 45-2350). Dave Cohen, the Guitar King of the L.A. folk revival scene, hits the charts with his acoustic twelve-string, backing up Bobby for Koppelman-Rubin.

# NOTICE!

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TWENTY - SEVEN

## STOP

Help Save The Youth of America  
DON'T BUY NEGRO RECORDS

(If you don't want to serve negroes in your place of business, then do not have negro records on your juke box or listen to negro records on the radio.)

The screaming, idiotic words, and savage music of these records are undermining the morals of our white youth in America.

Call the advertisers of the radio stations that play this type of music and complain to them!

Don't Let Your Children Buy, or Listen  
To These Negro Records

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For additional copies of this circular, write  
**CITIZENS' COUNCIL OF GREATER NEW ORLEANS, INC.**  
509 Delta Building New Orleans Louisiana 70112

Permission is granted to re-print this circular

(The above was sent in by a Southern friend. -Sd.)

## THE POLITICAL APPROACH<sup>t</sup> TO FOLK MUSIC

RHYTHM, RIOTS AND REVOLUTION. By Rev. David A. Noebel. Tulsa: Christian Crusade Publications, 1966. 352pp. \$1.

SING OUT! Volume 16, Number 5 (November, 1966). New York: Oak Publ. \$1.

RHYTHM, RIOTS AND REVOLUTION is the latest paperback to adorn the nation's conservative bookshelves, courtesy of Rev. Billy James Hargis' Christian Crusade. Noebel, a former Wisconsin preacher who is now dean of the "Christian Crusade Anti-Communism Youth University" in Manitou Springs, Colorado, has frequently taken time off to stump around the country for Rev. Hargis' various causes, especially the ones espoused in this book.

R, R & R is an expansion of an earlier pamphlet by Noebel, COMMUNISM, HYPNOTISM AND THE BEATLES. Noebel seeks to expose four avenues via which Communists are destroying American music, and ultimately the American way of life. Noebel's first target is Young Peoples' Records, a firm which has great success to this day selling a line of children's records, mostly recorded in the 1940's. This outfit had the misfortune (or the genius, depends on how you look at it) to hire Pete Seeger and several other artists who happened to think left of center, and to make some records that certain educators have discovered to have a hypnotic effect on small children. After introducing much miscellaneous evidence of the leftist connections of some of the people involved (I notice that Groucho Marx, who recorded FUNNIEST SONG IN THE WORLD for YPR, and several others of their artists are not included) Noebel concludes that YPR is a Commie plot to sicken the minds of America's kiddies. (Our family had at least 20 of these records. I guess that's what drove me into doing such insane things as publishing this magazine. But I still nominate David Seville's CHIPMUNK SONG as the sickest kid's record of all time).

Target No. 2. Having prepared the kids' minds for slaughter with MUF-FIN IN THE COUNTRY, the Commies drive them to the brink with — The Beatles.

After all, the Beatles are sitting ducks for a preacher's wrath. Noebel makes hay with Lennon's writings, and brings in several learned analyses of the Beatles' in-person crowd appeal to cinch the issue.

Target No. 3. The largest part of the book is a broadside attack on the Sing Out!-Oak-Folkways axis, and the whole topical song movement. Poor old Pete Seeger, already buried under a mountain of HUAC depositions in the YPR bit, is dug up and buried all over again, along with all his friends. Not only Irwin Silber (who is hardly ever mentioned without the tag-line ("who has been identified under oath as a member of the Communist Party")). But Almeda Riddle. Jean Carignan. Mississippi John Hurt. (Page 174). (LSK squeaks in via a footnote on page 127). Folk music, we are informed, serves as the first explicit musical call to revolution, presumably aimed at the minds already weakened by kiddie records and the Beatles.

Target No. 4. In which Targets No. 2 and 3 merge into "rock 'n' folk" (sic). "This synthesis", orates Rev. Noebel, "could well spell the doom of the United States of America, for no nation can long endure with its younger generation singing itself into defeatism, pessimism, a peace-at-any-price mentality, disarmament, appeasement, surrender, fear of death, hatred toward the South, atheism, immorality and negation of patriotism". (Page 212). Wow. That must make the Byrds feel positively power-drunk.

What to make of Rev. Noebel and his little book? Crackpot or prophet? Well, we would be the last to deny that a lot of important people in folk music have been deeply involved in organizations which would like to bring about great changes in the society and government of the United States, with or without the assistance of Moscow. As will be shown below, we are concerned

when political causes, of this or any other sort, get mixed up with folk music to the point where they distort its true purpose and meaning. A case needs to be made against this type of thing. But Mr. Noebel's book will not do the job. First of all, it has a goodly share of factual distortions, half-truths and just plain errors. (One of the worst is on Page 193, where John Hammond, Jr., son of the Columbia Records producer, is alleged to have been on the board of directors of People's Songs at its incorporation in 1946. John Hammond, Jr. was three years old in 1946). Dylan's first, relatively apolitical album is conveniently left out of the discussion of his coming to record for Columbia (Page 217). On Page 199 Joan Baez is introduced as "one of the Beatles' many girl friends". For a nice self-contradiction, compare p. 118, second paragraph, with pp. 41-2.

A second, and more important defect is Noebel's almost exclusive reliance on guilt-by-association as a mode of attack. Noebel will never come out and attack Pete Seeger the man, the whole spectrum of his actions and motives and ideas and ideals. Rather, he confronts the reader with pages of data on what clubs he once belonged to, what nasty organizations he gave concerts for, his reception in Communist countries, etc. Having done that, he then proceeds to condemn everyone else Seeger has ever had anything to do with. This is a familiar method for political propagandizers, this guilt-by-association bit, but we don't think it convinces intelligent readers any more, if it ever did.

Thirdly, the sloppy, sensational style of writing and editing is unlikely to impress any of the people whom Noebel sees as being affected. His appeal is solely to the kind of people who buy Margis' publications regularly. These people do not like contemporary music anyway, so Noebel is telling them what they want to hear. (There can not be too much other justification for the in extenso quote of a Metropolis, Ill. Musicians Union man, who covers up, with a lot of extraneous B.S. on modern society, what I suspect is basically his discontent because the union fiddlers and trumpet players who can't play modern music are finding jobs getting scarcer).

With all his skill at documentation, Noebel could easily make a case just as strong as this one against the classical music establishment in America. But this would not go over so well with his middle-aged audiences, many of whom undoubtedly share Rev. Noebel's deep-seated wish for a return to "nice" music. In a precious chapter called "Music Hath Charms" he sets out his preferences in this order: marches; hymns like "Blest Be the Tie That Binds"; "the soft lullaby"; Beethoven, Mozart and Liszt; "good, solid musical comedies", and, last, "the catchy rhythms of the spirituals and camp meeting songs of a few years past". (Would Rev. Noebel care to discuss the political implications of a good Holiness service?)

Far be it from us to endorse such redbaiting. On the other hand, the very briefest examination of the current issue of SING OUT! will show it playing resolutely right into the hands of the scribes of the Far Right.

At least they have the guts to come right out and tell us where they stand on this politics/folk issue. The editorial "Extending Our Borders" on Page 2 undertakes in three paragraphs to justify the inclusion of the issue's most purely political article. "It must be quite obvious to regular readers of these pages by now that the editors of this magazine believe that all music, and most certainly folk music, cannot really be understood without understanding the society that produces it". Who could deny that? More later on this monumental statement.

The article in question, "The Angry Children of Malcolm X", by Julius Lester, occupies five pages (plus a full-page photo). It's not a bad piece. Lester's gloomy exploration of the current mood of the Negro may not speak for a majority of the Negro people, but it does speak well for the type of Negro who never gets a fair hearing in the Establishment press. About the only thing Lester says about folksongs is that freedom songs are now outdated.

The rest of the magazine carries a heavy dose of the topical-song presentations that have always been a fixture of SING OUT!. Of the 13 songs whose words and music appear, six are clearly identified with political or economic causes. That's less than half. The editors, however, cleverly swing the balance in favor of social-consciousness by printing a picture of a dead soldier next to the lyrics of "The Recruited Collier", which is about a live soldier who gives no indication that he is unhappy with his mission.

The cover is a marvelously militant red, white and blue affair, showing a band of marchers. And the first thing that catches the eye inside the book is the broadly headlined cover story, which jumps on another worthy bandwagon: the farm workers' strike at Delano, California. It is a hastily written piece which quotes at length the philosophy of a man who runs the "Farmers' Theater" at which many of the songs are sung, but the article says little about the songs themselves.

Sandwiched between this and the Lester article are two other pieces. One presents the reminiscences and philosophy of Jim Garland, a topical songwriter of the old school. These are refreshing, endearing pages of folk wisdom, in which topical songs emerge naturally as a component of the larger body of folksong. The other article, the first totally apolitical one yet, is Bruce Jackson's analysis of Newport '66.

We roll up to the centerfold with another article and a column. We can not really fault SING OUT! for running "They Swap at Kingdom Come" by Lee Pennington, since it is a comprehensive account of present-day folksong activities in a depressed area (Kentucky) which is also very rich in folksong tradition. The political leitmotif of the magazine rears its head frequently, and more subtly, in this piece. More refreshing, but admittedly less "relevant" is "Tony Glover IV" with his page and a half of philosophy, blown through a harmonica.

It is after the centerfold that SING OUT! proves its immeasurable worth as the rock of folk music journalism. The columns of Irwin Silber and Israel G. Young provide a legitimate place for sounding off on politics, morals, and aesthetics. Plenty of blowing room for the Subjective-Humanistic approach to folk music that is our undying legacy from these estimable sages. Lots of news and views from all over, too, intelligently presented. Young's light touch is a fine antidote for Silber's deadly recitation of various wrongs in the folk world.

Then come more features: record reviews, book reviews, a rollicking column by Dominic Behan, and the famous letters column. These are the meat and potatoes of the magazine in our opinion.

SING OUT! is a great magazine. It is as much on top of the Revival scene, at least the East Coast version, as it could ever hope to be. And it has made many significant contributions to the study of all kinds of traditional music. Its writing standard is high, its layout superb. It is the most important magazine in the field. It is for that reason that we feel a need to criticize it, a much greater need than we feel for criticizing Noebel's pulp job.

Our criticism can be summed up as follows: We find that the need for propagandizing liberal and radical causes is paramount in the minds of SING OUT!'s editors, and they have from the beginning chosen to present this propaganda in the form of a folksong magazine, which has somehow gotten to be so good that it is now leading thousands of young people into a corrupted sense of values regarding folk music; and that by its constant injection of politics into its treatment of all sorts of folk music, SING OUT! has set up such totally apolitical parties as John Hurt, Doc Watson, and THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW as fair game for criticism from conservatives of all sorts, from David Noebel to your mother, and has thus injured the whole of folk music in America.

Our suspicions are pretty well confirmed by the "Extending Our Borders" editorial. We are here told that Lester's article will "tell you more

about the music of the black man in America today than a desk drawer full of learned analyses of the sound of the sound of the blues, jazz, R & B, rock, or whatever".

We will grant that politics is more important to the future of the world than is folk music. But we believe that Mississippi John Hurt and Otis Rush have as much right to have their music discussed without attempts to tie it up with Black Power or something such, as Hindemith or Carl Orff have to have their music discussed without frequent tie-ins with Nazism. At the very least, we see no need to introduce more political concern into our discussions than the artists themselves would. We strongly suggest that all our readers keep up with PEOPLE'S WORLD, THE NEW REPUBLIC, TIME and AMERICAN OPINION. They'll tell you more about politics than SING OUT! ever will. Meanwhile, THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW will endeavor to provide you with an overflowing "desk drawerful" of enlightened commentary on what we know best - American folk and contemporary music.

2700  
V. 1

THE HIGH, LONESOME SOUND OF BILL MONROE & His Blue Grass Boys (Decca DL 4780)

A selection of sides originally made between 1950 and 1954 (plus one 1964 remake). Compiled and annotated (intelligently, with a discography) by Ralph Rinzler. The selection was made not to show off the fast-and-fancy side of bluegrass, nor to showcase traditional material, but to emphasize a particular white-blues quality in Bill's work, subjectively described by the title. A treasurable album. The cover gives a fine picture not only of Monroe but of the peghead he redecorated after receiving some shabby treatment from the instrument's manufacturer.

PETE SEEGER: DANGEROUS SONGS!? (Columbia CL 2549)

A historical anthology of topical-protest songs, selected with great care and wisdom, and performed with the subtle musicianship none of the younger protest singers have ever touched.

PHIL OCHS IN CONCERT (Elektra EKL-310)

Strictly for activists. The back cover contains, in lieu of notes, eight poems by Mao Tse-Tung, to which Ochs appends the query "Is this the enemy?" Well, Phil, we can figure that out from his poems about as well as we could have figured out Hitler from looking at his drawings.

### book review

HOW TO BE A FOLKSINGER: How to Sing and Present Folksongs; or the Folksinger's Guide; or Eggs I Have Laid. By Hermes Nye. Oak. 160 pp. \$2.45.

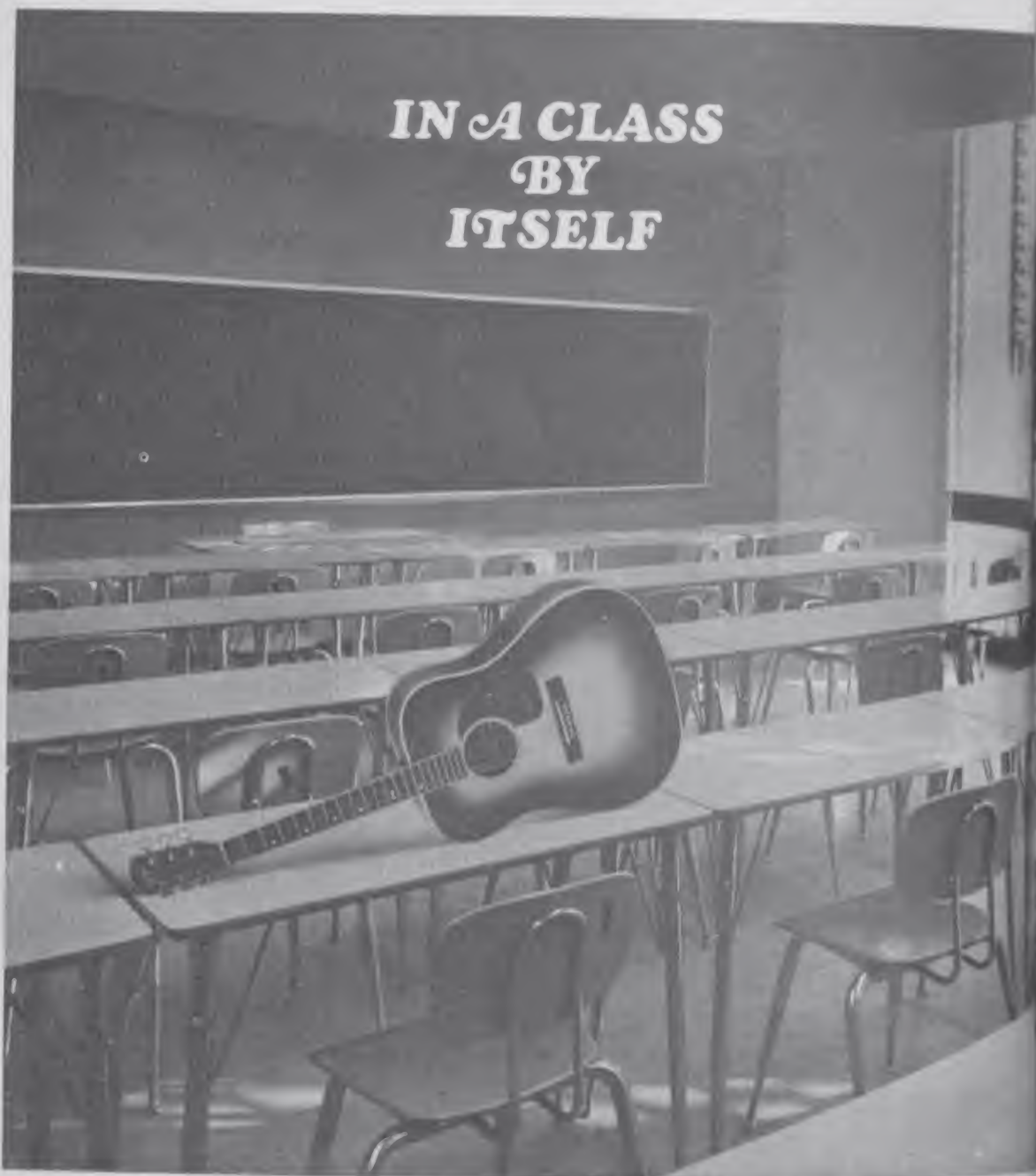
A well-meant, friendly little book, giving gentle-but-firm advice to the would-be-folksinger. By "folksinger" is meant the purveyor of songs from diverse sources, all of them plainly accompanied and sung in no particular authentic style. (The author's own Folkways discs will serve well as examples of the genre). If you aim to follow this pleasant, non-violent sort of musical career, this is the book for you. If, on the other hand, you desire to veer away from the middle of the road down such alternate routes as protest, bluegrass, blues or (horrors!) rock, you may have a hard time isolating Mr. Nye's musical advice (which will surely seem the purest anathema) from his practical advice on conducting one's career, social relationships, and general well-being (most of which is good, though certainly not favorable to the usual life of the 1966 urban folksinger). Mr. Nye writes in an extremely breezy laugh-a-minute style, which gets his points across splendidly, but is exhausting if taken in large doses.

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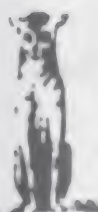


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THE LITTLE SANDY  
POETRY ROOM REVIEW

ON OUR COVER...this month is Clarence Ashley, an original member of the Carolina Tar Heels of old-timey 78 rpm record fame, and now the feature attraction of OLD-TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S, Volumes One and Two (Folkways 2355 and 2359). Cover drawing is by Jon Pankake.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

BY JON PANKAKE & PAUL NELSON

# DISORDER

(continued on page 21)

READERS WHOSE SUBSCRIPTIONS RUN OUT WITH THIS ISSUE OR #27 WILL FIND AN "X" MARKED IN THE APPROPRIATE BOX ON THE RIGHT. THREE DOLLARS WILL RING THE BELL FOR 12 MORE ISSUES. LSR, BOX 1109, MINNEAPOLIS 40, MINN.

#26

#27

## -- REVIEWS --

SOUTHERN JOURNEY; A Collection of Field Recordings From The South. Recorded in the field by Alan Lomax, 1959-60. (Prestige International 25001-25012) A 12-volume set.

Though drawn from the same set of tapes that produced the monumental Southern Folk Heritage Series issued on Atlantic, this collection is definitely not to be thought of as the skim milk of Lomax's epic return to American collecting. In fact, since the previous collection emphasized the modern forms of the music Lomax collected, Ken Goldstein's Prestige production is richer in traditional examples, as well as being 70% larger in scope than its predecessor.

DEEP SOUTH: SACRED AND SINFUL (P-I 25005) is the "sampler" of the Southern Journey series, an entertaining miscellany of music from all over the Negro South. It opens with a piece which Lomax describes rapturously as a "new national song" on the level of such previous Lomax smash hits as IRENE. It is a faintly Bahamian "sea chanty," SWEET ROSEANNE, rendered in a rather saccharine manner in waltz tempo by the well-rehearsed Bright Light Quartet (see also #25008). The piece is just insipid enough to fulfill Lomax's hopes and become another JAMAICA FAREWELL; just to make sure the jukebox dimes get into the right hands, Lomax has provided "a few appropriate additions" to the song as sung here, and duly copyrighted the improved version. Sing away, Belefonte, Alan's got his lawyer

waiting. Rather a strange way to collect folksongs.

I think it's safe to say the redoubtable Mr. Lomax will be much more fondly remembered for the rest of the collection. The Sea Islanders have four superb numbers of various sorts. Vera Hall, a comparatively sophisticated but most sincere and moving singer, sings a lullaby and a Christmas song and tells a lovely Nativity story. Fred McDowell does another superb Delta bottleneck blues, and two fine accompaniments for other singers. The Parchman prisoners provide a new song quite worthy of their ancient and fast-dying worksong tradition. The late Forest City Joe Pugh plays harp behind Willie Jones' version of a John Lee Hooker song. A fine fiddle tune and two more spirituals complete the set.

As a sampler this set is not the equal of SOUNDS OF THE SOUTH (Atlantic 1346), but it provides room for some worthwhile music that might not otherwise have been issued. Despite the fact that it shows (in the notes) most of the bad points of the Lomax approach to collecting and few of the good ones, it is good Southern music and honors any record cabinet. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

It is Lomax's contention (also stated in his earlier Atlantic collection) that the role of religious song in American tradition has long been underestimated, and as a result he is careful to document representative sacred songs in his pub-

lications.

SOUTHERN WHITE SPIRITUALS (P-I 25011) is loosely organized to include three aspects of sacred tradition: (1) Church music, including the highly emotional performances of both the formal, creatively organized Sacred Harp groups and of the spontaneous, primitive Baptist tradition; (2) sacred music in the home, best exemplified by Mrs. Ollie Gilbert's THE LITTLE FAMILY and Mrs. Almeda Riddle's WAYFARING STRANGER; (3) sacred music as a part of the professional country music entertainment media. This last includes songs performed by professional groups (MY LORD KEEPS A RECORD, done by this year's winners of the Union Grove Fiddler's Convention, The Mountain Ramblers) as well as songs learned by individuals from professional sources. Ruby Vass' OLD GOSPEL SHIP can be traced to the Carter Family's recording; and the Smith family's LONELY TOMBS to that of the Mainer's Mountaineers. A beautiful and important disc.

ALL DAY SINGING FROM THE SACRED HARP (P-I 25007) is devoted entirely to documentation of the Alabama Sacred Harp group, one of the few folk traditions that Lomax found flourishing on his travels. This is the only high fidelity recording available of this music (there are older albums on Folkways and on The Library of Congress series), and will be valuable to students of the tradition -- though the difficulty of the music precludes acceptance by the casual listener who will undoubtedly

prefer the more listenable WHITE SPIRITUALS album. It is highly ironic that for more readily accessible, but equally elaborate and complex musical religious fantasies, the urban listener must turn to the music of the Negro. (Reviewers: Editors)

The Georgia Sea Islands may well be the only place in the South where the performance of old Negro music in a reasonably pure style is a carefully organized, fairly large-scale activity. In his annotations for the two magnificent albums THE GEORGIA SEA ISLANDS Vols. 1 & 2 (P-I 25001-2), Lomax convincingly demonstrates the genuine antiquity of the music's style, noting its similarity to the Bahaman Negro tradition which was separated from that of Georgia at the time of the American Revolution.

Lomax's two volumes are both divided evenly between sacred and secular performances. The Sea Island spirituals differ greatly from traditional forms recorded farther inland (as on #25010). They are much more faithful to the more elaborate African forms; here are some of the finest survivals of African ritual dance music ever recorded in the New World. At the same time, they show a profound influence of eighteenth-century European harmony. And I say this advisedly; there seems good reason for believing that these harmonies have survived in tradition from slavery days, rather than being modern

additions to Sea Island culture (which possibility cannot of course be entirely ruled out without further documentation). First, the coastal areas undoubtedly heard more and better European music in the 18th century, especially in the church, than did the remote inland areas, and the comparatively insulated Sea Islands would seem to provide a natural preserve for tradition from that era. Second, the harmony of a piece like SHEEP, SHEEP (on #25001) is 18th century European harmony, not 19th century Moody and Sankey or 20th century blues. We have here a profound and cosmopolitan synthesis of antique traditions in this beautiful music.

It is perhaps appropriate to mention here another album of spirituals in which a synthesis of European and Afro-American traditions has taken place in a much different manner. On HONOR THE LAMB (P-I 25012) The Belleville A Capella Choir sings songs which are spirituals by nature, but which have been deliberately Europeanized in an apparently devoted attempt to achieve a conventional choral sound, much like that of the Fisk Jubilee Singers of a few decades ago. Within the limits of this style, the choir performs superbly, but the album has neither the uniqueness nor the significance of the rest of the Southern Journey, and for most purposes the Choir's single selection on #25008 will adequately represent its style.

To return to the Sea Islands, the islanders' secular singing is hardly less inter-

esting than their spirituals. Here the European influence is much less dominant than in the music tied to the Church. The same singers change effortlessly to a much rougher vocal style and more rudimentary harmonies. The African influence of course is unabated. The program is divided between game and dance songs and work songs. Included is what may be the oldest surviving Negro work song, **HARD TIMES IN OLD VIRGINIA**, reported by travelers to the South 150 years ago.

The place of the cottonfield hollers of the mainland is here taken by the rowing chanteys, representatives of a rich tradition also found in the Bahamas which has of late contributed several favorites to the world of **SING OUT!** One of them, **PAY ME MY MONEY DOWN**, is on this set. There are also chants of the **TAKE THIS HAMMER** variety (sung from oral tradition for a change!). Especially interesting is one song, **RAGGY LEVEE**, which is recorded as a work song in Vol. 1, and as a dance song in Vol. 2.

The magnificent quality of the singing on both Sea Island albums goes without saying; Bessie Jones and John Davis are voices which should be heard far and wide. The two volumes are easily the best of the Negro music recorded in this series, and are of unparalleled importance for the historical study of Afro-American musical tradition. (Reviewer: B. Hansen)

The white secular tradition is surveyed by Lomax in two volumes, **BALLADS & BREAK-DOWNS FROM THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS (P-I 25003)** and **BANJO SONGS, BALLADS, AND REELS FROM THE SOUTHERN MOUNTAINS (P-I 25004)**. The distribution of the song types is typical, with the magnificent unaccompanied ballads primarily the realm of the ladies (Texas Gladden, Almeda Riddle, Ollie Gilbert); and the wilder instrumental music that of the men (Hobart Smith, Wade Ward, Charley Higgins). The first volume leans toward the introspective ballads; the second toward the livelier instrumental fare.

The first set presents the J. E. Mainer string band in a high-stepping **THREE NIGHTS DRUNK**, featuring in Miss Carolyn Mainer Helmes one of the weirdest voices ever recorded, one which lends itself especially well to this zany tune. Neil Morris has a nice version of the rare **LASS OF LOCH ROYALE** -- in view of the unusually complete texts of the Morris songs, it would be interesting to know the medium of transmission of the family songs; one suspects print of some type.

There has been no available, decent recording of the "Locks and Bolts" ballad since Hally Wood's, and so it is doubly rewarding that Mrs. Riddle's excellent and moving **RAINBOW MID THE WILLOWS** variant has been included here. Her **HOUSE CARPENTER** contains some interesting personal textual amendments, and would be a definitive rendition of the song were it not for Texas

Gladden's Library of Congress recording.

The Smith family tradition is represented by Hobe Smith's THE LITTLE SCHOOL-BOY, an aggressively virile performance that contrasts sharply with Texas' well-known L of C TWO BROTHERS rendition.

Mrs. Gladden is presented on the second volume in all her loveliness with the tender THREE BABES, and brother Hobart with an amazing example of his "hillbilly piano picking," as Lomax has elsewhere termed it.

Sly old Bob Carpenter follows up his successful KENNY WAGNER of the Atlantic set with the bizarrely humorous BURGLAR MAN; while neighbor Wade Ward performs a reprise of one of his most thrilling Library of Congress recordings, a FOX CHASE that is adapted from its more conventional harmonica setting into a banjo showpiece with plenty of howling and barking.

Roy Birns' mandolin accompaniment to Spence Moore's GIRL I LEFT BEHIND ME raises an interesting question. It is essentially a simplified version of Bill Monroe's PIKE COUNTY BREAKDOWN, and one wonders whether Birns' accompaniment derives from the Monroe recording or whether Monroe's showpiece was originally formulated from the traditional song. Either case, it is a fascinating insight into the "folk process," and points up the value of field recordings in the study

of the evolution of modern country commercial and amateur style. (Reviewers:Editors)

THE EASTERN SHORES (P-I 25008), composed largely of Negro spirituals, carries the history of that form as sung on the East Coast from the ancient forms represented by the Sea Island singers up to the present, with a strong emphasis on contemporary forms. The set opens with two Sea Island performances (including a thrilling spiritual on the TITANIC theme) and then moves quickly into 20th century forms. The Silver Leaf Quartet represents the style made famous years ago by the Golden Gate Quartet, fellow Virginians. Their DARK DAY contrasts graphically with the Sea Island music in its rich use of blues harmony.

The Bright Light Quartet, a well-rehearsed but appealing group of fishermen, sings secular fishing chanteys (one of them very bawdy) as well as spirituals, all in traditional spiritual harmonic style. In this adaptation of the spiritual forms to secular material, we may perhaps see a hint of the origin of the style of such groups as the Moonglows and the Clovers whose early 1950's records marked the beginning of the rock and roll trend.

The Peerless Four represent in turn the modern gospel groups which have borrowed from the rock and rollers. This group, while accomplished and impressive, is very derivative (TROUBLE IN MY WAY is simply a rather ragged copy of the Swan Silvertones' Vee-Jay disc of the piece) and is thus a

quite typical representative of Southern music in the age of the radio.

There is also, along the way, a selection by the Belleville A Capella Choir, representing a divergent branch of spiritual evolution; for most purposes, this one track will be adequate to represent the choir which is presented at greater length on #25012.

Lomax's Southern Journey reminds one, in a way, of the legendary Southern Journeys made by Victor and Columbia field recording crews in the late 1920's: like his forebears, Lomax recorded everything he could get his hands on; and like his predecessors he accumulated and released a considerable amount of material of questionable value. But this very un-criticalness is what, in a sense, makes the recordings valuable; it is a complete survey, whose chaff will no doubt interest future scholars almost as much as the wheat. Not the most exciting set in the series, perhaps, but a well-handled historical survey which should be quite useful to the student and teacher of Negro music. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

Lomax's selection of sides for BAD MAN BALLADS (P-I 25009), performed by a significantly diverse (both geographically and racially) representation of his informants, is intended to illustrate his theory that the extremely popular American folksongs of crime contain strong existential (a hag-ridden hero strikes out in a

savage and bloody manner) and Gothic (a pure heroine is pursued and murdered in erotic circumstances) bases, as well as their common Puritanical resolutions, i.e. justice always triumphs in the end. Whether or not one subscribes to this ingenious and fascinating contention, the resultant collection of songs is most impressive, and is perhaps the album in the series most self-contained and representative of a facet of the total Southern tradition.

Of especial importance are the two versions of PO' LAZARUS, the existential Negro epic ballad, sung here by the professional Bright Light Quartet and howled by a gang of convicts at the Mississippi State Pen. These are astonishing performances of what Lomax calls "the finest Negro ballad," and ought to be heard by listeners who have been intrigued by the relatively pallid renditions of the song by the young city blues revivalists.

The gentle Neil Morris sings an attractively quaint BRENNAN ON THE MOOR in a strange version decked out in the historical trappings of a Walter Scott novel. Fellow Ozarkian Almeda Riddle does a standout HANGMAN, and Lomax again offers a unique explanation for the popularity of this ubiquitous ballad.

RAILROAD BILL, a guitar piece which has been circulating in the city "aural tradition" now for over a decade, is once again



given a definitive rendition by Hobe Smith, which ought to set all the folk-niks to learning this piece all over again.

Spence Moore's MURDER OF THE LAWSON FAMILY is a more contemporary song, and one which would be laughable in its bathos were its modern-day counterpart not so often a part of our morning newspaper.

In all fairness, it must be said that the performances by E. C. Ball of PRETTY POLLY and by Hobart Smith of CLAUDE ALLEN are available in more vigorous recordings on Library of Congress albums, and their inclusion here seems redundant in light of the many rarer songs and performances which certainly could have been substituted for them.

We predict that this very attractive album will find special favor among city singers and others who feel that in these staid and conformist times the thought of an American striking out at the harassment of his circumstances with a violent gesture of affirmation (or negation) is a great inspiration indeed. (Editors)

YAZOO DELTA BLUES & SPIRITUALS (P-I 25010) surveys the historical styles of the Delta much as Arhoolie's I HAVE TO PAINT MY FACE surveyed its contemporary styles, and reveals a sporadic but often devoted cultivation of older forms among the elder musicians of the inland plains. Mr.

Lomax provides in the notes a categorization (perhaps dangerously neat) of the styles of his informants into historical periods.

There is fine representation here of the ancient dance music forms. Ed Young, the exciting fifer of the Atlantic sets, provides another fine tune, and the oldest traditions are further represented by a DEVIL'S DREAM variant played on the "quills" and by a fiddle-guitar duet similar to Louisiana's Butch Cage & Willie Thomas.

Fred McDowell, the "star" of the set, does two blues, one the familiar 61 HIGHWAY, the other a highly personal, improvisatory piece; he also contributes two very moving spirituals after the manner of Blind Willie Johnson. Another blues singer and player is Parchman inmate John Dudley, giving a capable though uninspired representation of the Delta's most famous tradition, bottleneck. Contrary to Lomax, I find Dudley's performance squarely in the manner of the 1920's, and far less advanced than the style of Robert Johnson.

Spirituals and work songs complete the survey; here are more of the vigorous, rough gospel singers whom we met on Atlantic. These spirituals are the product of a musical culture which was much more isolated from outside influences during its formative years than were the Sea Islands, but which since Emancipation has become much less isolated. Blues influence is

considerable, much more so than in the Sea Island music. The work songs recorded here are gang songs, the "lowest common denominator," perhaps, of Negro music, and they show an elemental similarity to the analogous Sea Island songs. However, in two recently composed worksongs, MAMA LUCY and I'M GOIN' HOME, something of the free style of the apparently extinct field holler may be heard. A worthy survey of one of America's most colorful traditions is in this album.

FOLK SONGS FROM THE OZARKS (P-I 25006) is significant in that it is the first attempt on records to survey the regional tradition that amalgamated facets of Eastern, Southern, Midwestern, and cowboy song into the distinct body of music studied in Vance Randolph's tremendous collection of OZARK FOLK SONG volumes.

The chief performers are the droll Neil Morris, Mrs. Almeda Riddle, now well known to city fans through her festival appearances, a less publicized but equally accomplished lady ballad singer, Mrs. Ollie Gilbert, and a fiddler named Absy Morrison who plays his instrument in a curiously stilted and scholarly fashion, but who has consciously saved scores of obscure tunes, such as his SCOTCH MUSIK, from oblivion.

Mrs. Riddle and Mr. Morris set the tone for the album, and it is a decidedly lyric and subdued collection, homely and intimate, lacking the intensity and musical

complexity that mark the music of the hill country further east. The lack of influence this important tradition has hereto had on the urban revival bears witness to the disproportionate attention given the Appalachian region; this set bears close and widespread listening. (Editors)

\* \* \* \* \*

NEW BRITON GAZETTE Vol. II (Folkways 8734)

Slightly less successful than its predecessor, Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger's second disc of original compositions seems a bit frivolous in its insistence on bombs, strontium, and the problems of Tin Pan Alley agents as subjects of attempts at musical art. Yet, there is THE FIRST TIME EVER I SAW YOUR FACE, certainly the loveliest romantic song recently written anywhere, sung here by Peggy in its original form (our coffeehouse groaners have already corrupted the text, bowdlerizing it by substituting "was" for "lay" -- aren't we past childish monkey business yet, folks?). And MacColl's SHOALS OF HERRING, created out of not only the music but the very language and life of Sam Larner, is one of his greatest works -- and is worth the price of the album itself. Why can't songs like this be created by American singers? It certainly is not because our country is lacking in inspirational material and legend; nor is it because we do not have musical talent available. It is to be hoped that comparison of the Larner song with the

protest ditties on this album will once and for all establish the artistic value of writing about the tree rather than the forest, about people rather than masses, and about human emotion rather than socio-political causes. The failures and successes of GAZETTE Vol. II are an object lesson and an illustration in the field of contemporary "folksong" writing. (Editors)

ORIGINAL RHYTHM AND BLUES HITS BY R & B STARS (Camden 740)

Victor's \$1.98 label jumps on the "oldies but goodies" bandwagon, and to put it mildly, produces a record that is much, much gooder than usual. Here are some of the very best products of the prosperous "race" record line the company featured through the 1940's, well before anyone thought of calling it "rhythm and blues." Here are prime performances by Arthur Crudup, Sonny Boy Williamson, Big Maceo, Washboard Sam, Tampa Red, Jazz Gillum, and Arbee Stidham. Blues fans will especially dig Gillum's original of his famous KEY TO THE HIGHWAY, and Sonny Boy's ecstatic, ribald ELEVATOR WOMAN, with (listen close) Yank Rachel on mandolin. Two other items, by Lil Green and the Four Clefs, both sensationally popular in their day, complete this comprehensive survey of the 1940's scene. For sound commercial reasons, a 1956 rocker by Mickey (himself an R&B veteran) and Sylvia is included. Dollar for dollar,

this is as good as any blues anthology we've heard; one performance by a singer in his prime is often worth more than a whole LP by the same man in his old age. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

OLD TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S Vol. 2 (Folkways 2359)

How tremendous it is that Tom Ashley and his gang have become almost as much a part of the current folk scene as Pete Seeger and The New Lost City Ramblers! The demand for this great group at clubs and folk festivals throughout the country is one of the few gratifying symbols of taste and health in the folksong revival, and a good brassy nothumb at the big business phoniness of such fiascos as the incredible TV HOOTENANNY show.

This follow-up to the popular success of the first Ashley album on Folkways reflects in many ways the changes in the group due to their "discovery." Sounding much more precise and confident than in the earlier family atmosphere of the first record, the group now breezes along with the assurance of the Marine Band on parade, and has reached even further into its collective songbag to offer us a grand discful of old-timey delights.

Tom himself has once again picked up his old "two dollar" banjo, and plays it as well as he did thirty years ago when he

first recorded LITTLE SADIE and POOR OMIE. Doc Watson leans way in to the microphone as he proves beyond a doubt that he is the Earl Scruggs of the flat-pick, and fiddling Fred Price surprises us all by singing lead on the sacred DANIEL PRAYED.

A great sidelight is that Tom has rounded up his old cronies, Dock Walsh and Garley Foster, the members of his classic group of the 1920's, The Carolina Tar Heels, for a musical reunion. The old codgers sound a little ragged on MY HOME'S ACROSS THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS, but the old-time spirit is sure and strong, and certainly warrants further recording.

The audience Ashley and his group have created for themselves among the city folk certainly won't have to be goaded into buying this record by us. As for the rest of you -- what are you waiting for? (Reviewers: Editors)

(As a scholarly footnote, we hasten to assure Ralph Rinzler that a recording of Grayson and Whitter doing GOING DOWN THE LEE HIGHWAY does exist. It's Bluebird B-5498B, Ralph.)

More reviews on page 22. Watch future LSR's for news of an exciting new LP anthology of reissues of classic old-timey 78's from the "golden age" of hillbilly recording. "Nuff said."

(EDITORS' COLUMN continued from page 2..)  
... Folks, you've all heard the saying that a fool and his money are soon parted. If that's true, yours truly are the biggest fools that ever wrote for an audience of wise men. To be more specific, our printing press has been sold out from under us, and as a result we will soon astound the world by the most amazing and radical change in format experienced by a commercial (Ha!) enterprise since Lucky Strike Green went to war.....Wedgely Todd reports from the west coast on the Monterey Folk Music Festival, "Despite the racket from an adjacent airport, and the hipster antics of the L.A. idiot disc jockey that MC'd the affair, the talent of Tom Ashley and his gang, Roscoe Holcomb, and Bill Monroe made the festival worthwhile. The top moments for me were Monroe and Doc Watson doing a program of Monroe Bros. duets!! Even though pickings are slim out here for authentic musicians like myself, I passed up a booking in Fresno to hustle up to the Bay area to catch Mike Seeger's Memorial Day solo concert. He does a great BACHELOR'S HALL with fiddle; hope he records it soon. Talked to Bob Dylan in Berkeley. This youngster has big ideas and will go far, but appears to want to leave folk music behind. Will send you an account of the Berkeley Festival later. Right now, I'm off to NYC, and hope to earn enuf change to get me to Newport"... See you next issue, sportsfans!

(Reviews continued from page 20...)

PINK ANDERSON: Vol. 2 (Medicine Show Man)  
(Prestige Bluesville 1051)

Here, in the second of a three-disc series envisioned as a comprehensive sampling of his entire repertoire, singer-guitarist Anderson performs a group of the comic songs which were mainstays of the Southern medicine-show entertainers of bygone days. These songs, used to draw the audiences' attention for a sales pitch, are for the most part simple, lighthearted Southern vignettes such as GREASY GREENS. Some of them may be Pink's own compositions. In addition, the well-known TRAVELLIN' MAN appears, as well as IN THE JAILHOUSE NOW. Some of the songs (CHICKEN) are intriguing in their reflection of the Southern Negro's uncritical acceptance of a comic tradition originated as a joke at his expense. Also included, as examples of the variety these versatile men could give their programs upon their listeners' requests, are a gospel song and Ray Charles' I GOT A WOMAN.

The genre gives Pink good opportunity to show off his capable rag-picking on this disc. It all sounds like it could sell quite a bit of Indian Remedies, and apparently it did: Pink sang with the Indian Remedy company for thirty-one years. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

READ BARRY HANSEN'S COLUMN IN RECORD RESEARCH MAGAZINE--A REGULAR FEATURE.

BLIND SNOOKS EAGLIN: THAT'S ALL RIGHT  
(Prestige Bluesville 1046)

New Orleans' Snooks Eaglin (here christened "Blind" for the best commercial reasons) here appears in his second solo recital on LP. It is an appealing and exciting program which, like Eaglin's Folkways disc, draws consciously from many recorded blues sources. He draws from specific recordings by Washboard Sam, Amos Milburn, Ray Charles, and Arthur Crudup, and obvious imitations of Lightnin' Hopkins (WALK-IN' BLUES) and Fats Domino also appear. Like the Folkways disc, this one contains a regular anthology of recent blues styles, and Eaglin always seems capable of bringing out the best in a given blues style. What makes this disc significant, however, is the progress Eaglin seems to be making (compared with the Folkways LP) toward the development of a personal style of his own. In ALBERTA, MAILMAN PASSED, WELL I HAD MY FUN, and FLY RIGHT, BABY we hear him in performances of considerable originality. His half-choked but still fervent high pitched singing goes a long way toward putting some intimacy of emotional communication into the modern R&B manner, and his richly "orchestral" accompaniment on 6 and 12 string guitars (recalling the instrumental backings of R&B records) should prove highly interesting to guitar fanciers. This is a fast-moving and

thoroughly delightful disc which blues fans of all persuasions should be eager to own. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

CLARA WARD AND HER SINGERS: COME IN THE ROOM (Vanguard 9101)

Whatever Vanguard may have done to folk music in the past, it has enough sense not to tamper with the Ward Singers. Favorites for many years with the Negro spiritual audiences, they give a program of performances in their original and unbeatable style, undiluted and unexaggerated. True, those accustomed to earlier styles of spirituals singing may find 12 GATES TO THE CITY too close to rock & roll, or WE SHALL WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY a bit sentimental, but the fact is that this album is a very accurate representation of what is being heard in the Negro churches today, and of what Negroes want to hear when they buy spiritual records--electric organ and all. One can't be puristic about it, but it is great music, and it is wonderful that Vanguard has let them alone rather than giving them the treatment, for instance, that Columbia has given Mahalia Jackson. Just one quibble: it should be noted that Vanguard's eminent annotator runs afoul of the usual Negro terminology to a certain extent in his third paragraph. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

ADDITIONAL RECORDS & RECORD CHATTER....

HEDY WEST (Vanguard 9124) Her first solo.  
Sandy Bull: FANTASIAS FOR GUITAR AND BANJO (Vanguard 9119) Paging Billy Faier!  
THE WEAVERS AT CARNEGIE HALL Volume three. (Vanguard 9130) Like Old Man River....  
Erik Darling: TRRAINTIME (Vanguard 9131)  
JOHN HAMMOND (Vanguard 9132) Blues & good!  
Ian & Sylvia: FOUR STRONG WINDS (Van. 9133)  
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Roosevelt Charles: BLUES AND GOSPEL SONGS (Vanguard 9136)  
Odetta: ONE GRAIN OF SAND (Vanguard 9137)  
DIAN AND THE GREENBRIAR BOYS (Elektra 233)  
Wild belting looker, great accompaniment, fine country songs, foot-stomping fun.  
The Dillardards: BACK PORCH BLUEGRASS (Elektra 232) Ozark youngsters with modern stylings.  
The Gardners: FOLKSONGS FAR AND NEAR (Prestige International 13062)  
Bonnie Dobson: MERRY GO-ROUND OF CHILDREN'S SONGS (Prestige International 13064)  
FOLKSONGS FOR CHILDREN (Prestige International 13073) Various artists including Jack Elliott, Peggy Seeger, & Frank Warner.  
Charles River Valley Boys: BLUEGRASS AND OLD-TIMEY MUSIC (Prestige International 13074) Down east college boys.  
Bill Keith and Jim Rooney: LIVIN' ON THE MOUNTAIN (Prestige International 13075)  
PHILADELPHIA FOLK FESTIVAL Volume one. (Prestige International 13071) Features Dobson, Elliott, Mike Seeger, Sonny Miller, Prof. Clarence Johnson, Mabel Washington.

PHILADELPHIA FOLK FESTIVAL Volume two,  
(Prestige International 13072) Features  
T. Aaron, G. Davis, Keith & Rooney &  
Richmond, and Pete Seeger.  
Bill and Charlie Monroe: EARLY BLUEGRASS  
MUSIC BY THE MONROE BROTHERS (RCA-Camden  
774) Classic country mandolin-guitar duets.  
JUDY HENSKÉ (Elektra 231) The beatniks'  
Ann-Margret.  
THE WATSON FAMILY (Folkways 2366) Doc and  
his wife, children, and relatives.  
PETE SEEGER CHILDREN'S CONCERT AT TOWN  
HALL (Columbia 1947) In his element.  
Columbia says Bob Dylan's third album  
will be out sometime in September.  
Capitol has reissued its Leadbelly sides  
from the late 40's in LP form. Lead has  
to battle (of all things) a zither!  
Also Leadbelly reissues on the Mount  
Vernon label, a cheapie like Crown.  
PEG CLANCY POWER (Folk-Legacy FSE-8) The  
sister of the Clancy Brothers.  
"THE MAN OF SONGS," PADDY TUNNEY (Folk-  
Legacy FSE-1) British singer.  
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THE LITTLE SANDY  
POETRY ROOM REVIEW



**ON OUR COVER...** this month are three of the most exciting new performers in folk music and blues: (left to right) "Spider" John Koerner, Tony "Little Sun" Glover, and Dave "Snaker" Ray. Their debut album; **BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS** (Audiophile AP-78); has just been released, and has already garnered many critical plaudits. Alan Lomax calls them "excellent bluesmen," and says that he was "astonished by the record...I did not believe it was possible (for white singers) to come so close to Negro style." Barry Hansen, our regular blues reviewer, states that "the performers on **BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS** come closer to a valid new development of the Negro idiom than any other white performers previously recorded...This is a disc that will surely be a collector's item in the future, as surely as the best blues of the 1930s are collector's items now." **BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS** was supervised, edited, and annotated by LSR's Paul Nelson, and represents our first step into the record field; the album bears the official LSR SEAL OF APPROVAL (GOOD HOUSEKEEPING be damned). Cover photo is by Paul Nelson.

## EDITORS' COLUMN

By Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake

(EDITORS' COLUMN will continue on page 29)

### \*\*\* RECORD REVIEWS \*\*\*

"SPIDER" JOHN KOERNER, DAVE "SNAKER" RAY, AND TONY "LITTLE SUN" GLOVER: **BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS** (Audiophile 78)

It seems inevitable that by 1970 most of the blues worth hearing will be sung by white men. For years, the younger Negroes have been losing interest in this "old-fashioned" form; no really significant young Negro blues singer has emerged since 1953. As the older singers pass their prime, the Negro blues seem doomed to certain extinction. Caucasians have been providing more and more of the audience for blues lately, and sooner or later they will be providing most of the performers (as they do already in another "outmoded" Negro form, Dixieland jazz).

It has been a long and painful process for whites to master the idiom of the blues. Some performers have restricted themselves to strict imitation of classic blues recordings; others have, with uneven success, tried to create an individual style within the idiom. I believe that the performers on **BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS** come closer to a valid new development of the Negro idiom than any white performers previously recorded. On this record, we hear three performers, each of whom has developed a distinctive style fully faithful to Negro tradition, in a wide range of Negro-inspired forms, with emphasis on blues.

"Spider" John Koerner is certainly the most exciting new folksinger to appear on records since Bob Dylan. In many ways, he is an even finer artist than Dylan. He is less daring, eccentric, spectacular, but equally versatile, and with a firmer command of his source material. And certainly no less exuberant. Two of Koerner's original compositions on this record show his thorough assimilation of the older Negro forms: RAMBLIN' BLUES, cast in the form and mood of Muddy Waters' ROLLIN' STONE, and CREEPY JOHN, which blends Waters' style with the blues of the 1930s. (Even the unusual theme of the latter -- sex slaying -- is handled with complete naturalness.)

The highly original side of Koerner's delivery comes out in several of his other numbers. Three songs from books and records -- HANGMAN, LOW DOWN ROUNDER, and BUGGER BURNS -- are carefully worked into this style, in the same way as old-time Negro performers revised their borrowed material. The style itself is descended from no single Negro performer, but rather a new offshoot of the basic rag tradition from which the styles of Jesse Fuller, Gary Davis, and Furry Lewis were other offshoots. Built largely on repeated short figures, and featuring a much tighter integration of voice and guitar lines than is usually heard, the style proves amazingly flexible in Koerner's hands, ranging from the free-wheeling

GOOD TIME CHARLIE to the vengeful TOO BAD (to name two more of Koerner's superb originals). And he experiments: BANJO THING blends blues lyrics with a form and mood suggesting modal banjo tunes. The instrumental TED MACK RAG suggests the close links of the style with pre-blues Negro dance music.

The steady roll of Koerner's guitar (a metal-bodied National similar to that used by Blind Boy Fuller, but with the intriguing addition of a seventh string), is punctuated by authoritative bass runs and plenty of fancy picking, and by the irresistible two-beat of his feet (both of them). Musically and technically, the Audiophile recording does him complete justice.

Dave Ray, five years younger than Koerner, has gone through similar processes, assimilating many forms of Negro music and developing an exciting, idiomatic style of his own. While perhaps not yet the well-rounded artist that Koerner is getting to be; at his best, Ray can be as honestly and profoundly moving as any white man who has ever sung blues. His guitar technique, dominated by the influence of Leadbelly, is superb, and he is gifted with a magnificent voice, as rich and sonorous as Broonzy's.

The recording does not show Ray's talents quite as well as it does Koerner's; it tends to overemphasize the "darker" side of his repertoire (perhaps

to balance Koerner), and shows him still fighting the self-consciousness he has pretty well licked in his in-person performances. There is little inkling (except in STOP THAT THING) of his fine sense of humor.

But nobody can sing an ominous blues as well as Ray can, and his portion of the album can hardly be considered inferior. His thrilling voice is heard at its best in Blind Lemon's ONE KIND FAVOR, a song everybody (including Van Ronk and Dylan) has been doing lately; Ray's emotional genuineness easily overshadows all competition. Another vocal masterpiece is the holler, GO DOWN OL' HANNAH, which Ray does unaccompanied and without gimmicks in a serious and highly successful attempt to develop the intrinsic musical possibilities of the unadulterated form.

Dave's guitar work shines on the brilliant bottleneck tune, IT'S ALL RIGHT, an improvisation partially based on STATESBORO BLUES. His unmatched 12-string guitar technique (as the liner notes claim, he truly "knows no peer on the instrument") is heard on Sleepy John Estes' STOP THAT THING, and in an original tour de force, SNAKER'S HERE.

His remaining numbers are more ordinary, but still valid and moving blues. The wonderfully pianistic, Yancey-influenced guitar playing on Robert Johnson's DUST MY BROOM and the modern jazz-tinged

instrumentation on JIMMY BELL are memorable.

The third man on the record is Tony Glover, who plays harmonica on several of the tracks by Ray and Koerner, and does one unaccompanied solo. Like the other two, he has studied the old blues thoroughly and developed a style of his own within the idiom. A musician of long experience (he had his own group as long ago as 1958), Glover is responsible for some of the ideas heard in Koerner's and Ray's playing as well as for the intense and skillful accompaniments he provides. SUN'S WAIL gives a fine sampling of his introspective and emotional solo work; I only wish there had been room for more of this (and also examples of his 6- and 9-string guitar technique) on the album.

The group has resisted the temptation to refer to itself as a body, largely because it only plays together here on two numbers. One of them, NUMBLIN' WORD, is stirring, but routine. The other one, an unaccompanied performance of LININ' TRACK, will probably become the best-known performance on the record, and with good reason. The three-part chanting of this holler is a fabulously successful experiment, highly original, yet genuine and idiomatic. These are the qualities that pervade the whole record, and these are what make it such a fine effort. The creation of a style which is original, yet which comes naturally out of the

evolution of traditional music, should be the supreme goal of the city folksinger, and this goal is to a great extent achieved by John Koerner, Dave Ray, and Tony Glover.

LSR co-editor Paul Nelson did the liner notes, planning, supervising, and editing of the recording, a thoroughly professional job. He can be especially commended for the timing: not a single number is allowed to take undue advantage of the long-playing record, nor are any of them unnaturally truncated (since there are 20 songs on the album, and each side runs about 27 minutes in length; this is quite an accomplishment). The technical details have been handled with loving care by Audiophile's E. D. Nunn.

This is a disc which will surely be a collector's item in the future, as surely as the best blues of the 1930s are collector's items now. Koerner, Ray, and Glover are here to stay.  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

Editors' Note: See EDITORS' COLUMN for full details on special money-saving offer on how to get BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS. Recapping briefly, you can: 1) pay us \$4.50 for the record; 2) pay us \$6.00 for the record and a 12-issue subscription to LSR. Special prices available to book and record stores. See EDITORS' COLUMN for more details. LSR, Box 1109, Minneapolis 40, Minnesota.

## THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: AMERICAN MOONSHINE AND PROHIBITION (Folkways 5263)

Clear of eye, steady of hand, and completely sober of intent (we think), the Ramblers here examine the delights, the terrors, and the peculiar American affinity for the fatal dram glass. Stagger right in and have a seat: this is a completely delightful romp through Boozeville (pruriently disguised as a Documentary), although we venture to say that the NLCR could charm Carrie Nation herself into bending a withered elbow and tapping her axe in time to the likes of GOODBYE OLD BOOZE, DOWN TO THE STILL HOUSE, and VIRGINIA BOOTLEGGER.

In an absolute fit of fair-mindedness, the Ramblers very nearly divide the songs equally between drunken bawls of delight and moral cries of outrage -- although it is clear that the listener is the winner, all the way from the militant, self-righteous strains of THE TEETOTALS to the boozy haze of THE INTOXICATED RAT.

Tom Paley here makes his last appearance as a Rambler, and perhaps it is nostalgia as much as anything else that makes us feel that he has never before so dominated a NLCR album with his talent. The sorrowful and honest singing of WHISKEY SELLER, the outrageous harmony singing on THE OLD HOME BREW, the Uncle Dave Macon banjo artistry on AL SMITH FOR PRESIDENT -- all will be missed and not easily replaced.

So let's pull up the o'erflowing bowl  
and toast Tom Paley out and Tracy Schwarz  
in, folks, for as long as the sun never  
sets on the Ramblers, we're still the  
winners.

(Editors)

HELLO AND GOODBYE TO HOYT AXTON ...

HOYT AXTON: THE BALLADEER (Horizon 1601)

Among those performers who choose to depart from traditional style in folk-singing, there are some who manage to make a sincere and effective emotional communication, albeit in another musical language; Joan Baez, for example. Then there are those who take advantage of the freedom offered by folk music to foist on a gullible public such tawdry histrionics as would get them hissed off the stage in any less tolerant part of the entertainment world. Mr. Axton is one of these. He knows every Coffeehouse Trick in the book. (There is no better record than this to use in class as an example of degenerate "folksinging.") The most mawkish Top 40 song pales beside his vulgar bathos and gross sentimentality. However much misplaced adoration Mr. Axton may exact from today's adolescents, one may rest assured that in twenty years he will sound sillier than THE PRISONER'S SONG.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

UNCLE DAVE MACON (RBF 51)

The execrable policy of the large record companies on reissues of classic country and blues 78 rpm singles ("There's not enough of a market to make reissues worth our while," says one mogul to another, "but neither will we allow small companies to make limited editions for a percentage of the take") is being challenged by a number of small commercial and private record companies who have adopted the gutsy last recourse of running up the black flag of piracy in order to make invaluable material available to their markets. RBF Records, which is distributed by Folkways, has reissued collections containing a number of blues classics in the past, and now turns to the field (and a nearly untapped one it is) of old-timey music with the natural, the profitable, the desperately-needed choice, Uncle Dave Macon.

With the two cuts on the Folkways Anthology, and with the continual credit given him by Pete Seeger and the New Lost City Ramblers when they sing his songs, the Grand Old Man hardly needs to establish a reputation. Most city fans will listen eagerly to this disc, if only to partake of the legend of Uncle Dave.

The enormous job of editing such a disc, considering the wealth of material that was generously made available to the project by Macon collectors, has been

handled superbly; any criticism of the title selection would be mere quibbling and a matter of personal taste: all the essential ones -- the great ones -- are here: CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN DEER RACE, MY DAUGHTER WISHED TO MARRY, FROM EARTH TO HEAVEN, etc. In addition, Uncle Dave is shown in all his contexts: solo, with guitar and/or fiddle, and in full string band.

Those perfectionists among us will question the nearly complete lack of scholarship exhibited by the issue: the notes are sketchy and anecdotal, and concern only Macon's biography. No analysis has been given the crucial problem of Macon's sources and his creativeness, nothing is said about the nature of his banjo playing, the personnel on the records is not identified (who is the great second voice on ALL IN DOWN AND OUT BLUES?; and who is the fiddler that comes in at the end of JOHNNY GRAY to contribute one of the greatest fiddle-and-banjo duets on records?), etc.

Your LSR editors have attempted to discuss some of these problems in an article on Macon soon to appear in SING OUT!, but for now, until some qualified folklorist tackles the organized study of Uncle Dave, let's adopt Pete Seeger's attitude as stated in the liner notes: here, at last, is Uncle Dave; let's have fun! After all,

Uncle Dave, is old-timey music in all its zany and sentimental glory, and when we listen to him, we hear the voice of a region, a philosophy, and an era in our century. Hallelujah, there!  
(Editors)

Editors' Note: Our article on Macon is in the Summer 1963 issue of SING OUT!, just out; send 75¢ to SING OUT!, 121 West 47th St., New York 36, N. Y., for your copy.

#### BIG BILL BROONZY SINGS FOLK SONGS (Folkways 2328)

Here is another Blues Renaissance album, by the man who started it all. This set, "a new album from previously unissued masters," comes (like virtually all LP Broonzy) from the last years of his life, when he won thousands of white fans for blues which he carefully reshaped for his new audience.

Side A exhibits, especially in its last three tracks, Bill's refined late style at its best. The old reel-and-rock is displaced by a careful, sensitive search for emotional effect; when he isn't being too careful (as on much of his Columbia LP), Bill can be very moving, as he is here.

Side B is devoted to the kind of songs Bill added to his repertoire in his last period for the benefit of his new audiences. There are few blues here, and ANANIAS, BILL BAILEY, and JOHN HENRY are recorded for the

umpteenth time. Bill really gets warmed up on the latter song; when his aching fingers begin to slow down after several fantastic runs, Pete Seeger comes on brilliantly to rescue the take.

There is something of a surplus of late Broonzy on the market (and a shortage of early Broonzy -- observe, Frank Driggs!), but this is as good as anything available, with the possible exception of Broonzy's earlier COUNTRY BLUES disc on Folkways. (Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

MIKE SEEGER: OLD-TIME COUNTRY MUSIC  
(Folkways 2325)

The talent and imagination of "the poor man's Seeger" have long rated a solo recording, and this disc by the popular New Lost City Rambler ought to provide a field day for the growing legions of city fans who have overcome the prejudices fostered by the folk music revival against the naive and homely strength of honest country music.

Though a solo album in name only (eight of 18 sides are multiple dub recordings, with Mike singing and playing duets and even full string band numbers with himself), the record gives Seeger full play in the use of his creative approach to the rediscovery and repropagation of the treasure chest of traditional music recorded originally by country musicians of 30-and-more years

ago, long before phonographic collecting became an accepted part of formal folklore.

As in any album bearing Mike's name, a prime value here is the freshness of the repertoire; Mike has long been one of the few city musicians to conscientiously escape from the limited and tired circle of Sandburg-Lomax-PEOPLE'S SONGS titles (songs that have been cannibalistically reworked now for a generation by our professional purveyors of folk music).

RICHMOND COTILLION is a three-fold (fiddle and two banjos) demonstration of Seeger's instrumental virtuosity, and a dance tune as graceful and as evocative as its title. OH MY LITTLE DARLING is a "banjer" tune of great warmth and triumphant melodic sweep; we predict that it will soon become a standard among city players, thanks to Mike's performance. Mike reveals a hitherto unsuspected versatility in presenting a subdued, lyric FRANKIE (from the old race record of Mississippi John Hurt) without a note of esthetic falsity. The same might be said of the savage, haunting WORRIED BLUES (from Frank Hutchinson), accompanied by a fluid, stinging dobro, and presented in a mood which Mike has not before shown us.

Those who accuse Mike of being an overly-literal mimic of his sources will be especially embarrassed by his creative transformation of HANDSOME MOLLY, the driving Grayson and Whitter tour de force,

into a wandringly-intoned fiddle-and-voice piece that could well have been envisaged by Fiddlin' John Carson or Blind James Howard. This side, along with WILL THE WEAVER (which Mike has wittily changed into a harmonica-honking hillbilly blues), best exemplifies the talent which sets Mike apart from other city revivalists who share his purely mechanical musical gifts: he has the intelligence and insight to draw together resources from many lines of country musical tradition, mixing them and recoloring them into new musical conceptions that are as solidly in the country idiom as their inspirations. It is Mike's dedicated studiousness and good sense, as well as his musical gifts, which we believe will soon establish him as a major figure in the American folklore field.

The primary fault of the record lies ultimately in Mike's ambitiousness in attempting so complex a demonstration of his abilities and ideas. The multiple dubbing is, if not a gimmick, a mechanical contrivance that is out of place in presenting material of this nature. Identical voices singing in duet are musically incestuous, and often unpleasant to hear. The triple recording of one person playing three instruments simultaneously sacrifices more in recording fidelity than it gains in showcasing instrumental ideas. As is

proven by the brilliant solo recordings, Mike has more than enough variety of attack and sound to carry the weight of a solo album without the mechanical reiteration of dubbing.

Mike and his fellow New Lost City Ramblers have chosen to carry almost too great a burden: the responsibility of taking on themselves the lifework of so many great and forgotten country geniuses who created inspired art from an American experience long since swept under the rug of progress. Albums like Mike's OLD-TIME COUNTRY MUSIC, although few and far between, reassure us that the job is in good hands.

(Editors)

HENRY TOWNSEND: TIRED OF BEIN' MISTREATED  
(Prestige Bluesville 1041)

Henry Townsend, a Mississippi-born contemporary of Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, and John Lee Hooker, was among the first of his generation to record, doing some exciting sides for Columbia in the late 1920s. He has been inactive for some time, but when Sam Charters found him in St. Louis in 1961, he was still singing and playing, using used phonograph records to help broaden his style. Here, with two electric guitars, he sings 11 blues, mostly originals. His voice is a little flat, and I cannot agree with Charters' contention that his singing



has become more intense over the years. Electricity doesn't help him at all, and neither does the very limited second guitarist. But there are "moments" in nearly every one of these blues (example: the subtle evocation of an approaching train at the beginning of TRAIN IS COMING). SHE DROVE ME TO DRINKING comes closest to Townsend's brilliant old style. Townsend is apparently an intelligent and capable artist, and I suspect he is capable of making a much better album than this one, given the right conditions. He is one of those singers who ought to be using an unamplified guitar, whether he wants to or not.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

LESTER FLATT AND EARL SCRUGGS: HARD TRAVELIN' (Columbia 1951)

The very title of Flatt and Scruggs' newest album, HARD TRAVELIN', pinpoints its obvious flaws and, what is more dangerous, signals what Columbia has in mind for the Foggy Mountain Boys in the future. Country music being not now as lucrative as folk music, the moguls have apparently decided to make Flatt and Scruggs the first of the folkum bluegrass groups by tampering with both their style and repertoire. Thus the erstwhile solid 1940 standard bluegrass model is often left in the garage in favor of the sportier, more popular folk-o-matic 1963



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Coupe de Top Forty, a more "proper" and more marketable model. Lester nows tools his way down the road crooning PASTURES OF PLENTY, THE BALLAD OF JED CLAMPETT (from television's THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES series), and the album's title song, while Earl and the rest of the gang tinkle merrily away in the back seat with the country equivalent of Kingston Trio-type arrangements. Fortunately, the folk-omatic drive gives out about halfway through the album, but not before the entire engine has been flooded with its fumes. HARD TRAVELIN' is a mediocre record at best, and turning Flatt and Scruggs into something resembling country folkniks is not a good idea.

GREASY KID STUFF ...

PETER, PAUL AND MARY: (MOVING)  
(Warner Bros. 1473)

Listening to Peter, Paul and Mary sing folksongs is like watching Shakespeare's HAMLET being acted by Bobby Darin; it is modern all right, but what else can one say about it? At least at the end of such a performance of the Bard, most of the principals would be dead. No such luck here. The only casualty is folk music.  
(Reviewer: Bob Sarenpa)

WHY NOT SUBSCRIBE TO LSR RIGHT NOW? EVEN BEFORE YOU TURN THE PAGE TO READ ABOUT BOB DYLAN.

FLAT TIRE ...

THE FREEWHEELIN' BOB DYLAN  
(Columbia 1986)

"With my thumb out, my eyes asleep, my hat turned up and my head turned on, I'm driftin' and learnin' new lessons," Bob Dylan was quoted as saying in *TIME*, May 31, 1963. Unfortunately, about half of his eagerly-awaited second album suggests that both his eyes and his head were asleep.

Frankly, *THE FREEWHEELIN' BOB DYLAN* is a great disappointment. That such a creative energy and driving force as Dylan would ever be satisfied with some of the material issued here is a great mystery. The virtues of the first album were an electrifying and mercurial inventiveness (both as a songwriter and as an interpreter) and a natural gift for genuine directness and simplicity in the finest folk-derived sense; those virtues barely exist here. As a songwriter, he has become melodramatic and maudlin, lacking all Guthriesque economy; his melodies bear more relation now to popular music than folk music. As a performer, he is at times affected and pretentious, although his harmonica technique has greatly improved. The main trouble now seems to be that he has no foundation or base for his songs; they seem to float vaguely above the ground in

amorphous hazes; the talent is still apparent, but all the parts and working mechanisms seem to have broken down or gone out of control. Like Chaplin's feeding machine in *MODERN TIMES*, the functions have gotten all mixed up, and the result is a mess.

*BLOWIN' IN THE WIND*, Dylan's *THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND*, gets the album off to a fine start; Bob sings and plays it well, and the song should be with us at least as long as the folk revival (and probably a lot longer). *GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY* and *BOB DYLAN'S DREAM* are examples of what the liner notes (by Nat Hentoff) describe as Dylan's "particular kind of lyricism." The latter is so mawkish and slushy that one wonders if he meant it as a joke, while the former, despite a pretty melody, is marred by a strangely foppish manner of singing. *MASTERS OF WAR*, Dylan's epic Protest song, is dull and monotonous both in text and performance; its total effect suggests a manufactured rather than a real anger. *A HARD RAIN'S A-GONNA FALL*, being proclaimed by some as Dylan's masterpiece, seems far more a poem than a song (although Dylan says in the notes: "Anything I can sing I call a song"). Some of the images are striking and apt ("...ten thousand talkers whose tongues were all broken"); others merely akin to bad beatnik poetry. The cut is, however, one of the most interesting on the record. *OXFORD TOWN*, about James Meredith, is a pleasant

surprise; a protest song that ironically implies its "grimness" through common sense and good humor rather than baldly stating it.

Dylan wrote DOWN THE HIGHWAY when his girl went to Italy for a few months. In it, he attempts to utilize Charlie Pickett's beautiful guitar run on an unrelated song of the same title that appears on THE RURAL BLUES (RBF 202); the result is practically pure folknik, and Dylan has missed Pickett's point altogether. DON'T THINK TWICE, IT'S ALL RIGHT, according to reports, is the next Dylan song that will be given the pop treatment by groups like the Chad Mitchell Trio and the Limelites; it has a certain bitter-sweet charm to it. CORRINA, CORRINA makes feeble and cautious use of piano, bass, and drums in a pallid attempt at rhythm-and-blues. HONEY, JUST ALLOW ME ONE MORE CHANCE (from HENRY THOMAS SINGS THE TEXAS BLUES!, Origin Jazz Library OJL-3) gets the same treatment from Dylan as did Jesse Fuller's YOU'RE NO GOOD on the first album; perhaps it was a leftover cut from then, since its style is far more frantic and pell-mell than anything else on this record.

Undoubtedly the strangest, loosest, funniest, and least worked out pieces on the album are the three long nonsense and talking songs: BOB DYLAN'S BLUES, TALKING WORLD WAR III, and I SHALL BE FREE. All are by turns engaging and

futile, and all eventually fail because there is no logical continuity or point to them. Dylan is brilliantly funny or touching one moment, then floundering hopelessly in arid and embarrassing improvisation the next. His imagery falls far short of Guthrie's magic, and his wacky verses don't quite have that flash of humanitarian genius that marked Woody's as the work of a true folk poet. Instead, they stumble and stagger along, going nowhere, and not always with much style. There is, however, a great jug band harmonica on TALKING WORLD WAR III. I SHALL BE FREE uses roughly the same tune and form that Woody and Leadbelly used on their recordings of WE SHALL BE FREE for Folkways (2483 and 2488), although Dylan's verses are completely different.

A fine local singer recently made a most perceptive remark about the urban folk scene in general, not particularly about Dylan. He said: "Some singers are 98 per cent personality and only two per cent folk music, but that two per cent is a whole lot better than most of the people in folk music today." It seems a good summation of THE FREEWHEELIN' BOB DYLAN, an album that, like Arthur Miller's salesman, is "way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine," and nothing else. Dylan bases everything here almost 100 per cent on his own personality; there is hardly any traditional material, and most of the original material is not

particularly folk-derived. It is pure Bob Dylan (Bob Dylan's dream, as it were), with its foundations in nothing that isn't constantly shifting, searching, and changing. What Dylan needs to do is to square the percentages between traditional and original back to 50-50 (as in his first album) to give some anchor of solidarity to his work; his absurd concoctions and blendings miss their mark here (whereas before they landed dead center), and the album floats away into never-never land, a failure, but a most interesting one. Don't make the mistake of crossing off Bob Dylan yet, however; he still remains one of our most promising songwriters and performers. As it stands, he'll merely have a first and a third album.

(Editors)

Columbia has released a 45 rpm record of Bob Dylan singing CORRINA, CORRINA b/w MIXED UP CONFUSION. Dylan also appears on BROADSIDE BALLADS, Volume One (Broadside 301; order through Folkways for \$4.25), under the name of "Blind Boy Grunt," doing three numbers: ONLY A HOBO, TALKIN' DEVIL, and JOHN BROWN. The album will be reviewed in an upcoming LSR.

REMEMBER OUR ADDRESS CHANGE! SEND ALL YOUR MONEY TO BOX 1109, MPLS. 40, MINN.; NOT TO 3220 PARK AVE. SOUTH, MPLS. 7!

(EDITORS' COLUMN, continued from page 2)

There's a lot of interesting news this month, but first, two things. Perhaps the most important is that we've moved and changed our mailing address; we now live in a post office box with a zone and a Zip Code and everything. In the future, beginning immediately, address all correspondence and send all money to THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW, Box 1109, Minneapolis 40, Minnesota, 55440. Secondly, to celebrate our move from out of the little shack by the railroad tracks, we are making our most superspectacular record offer yet:

a) If you are not now an LSR subscriber, you get BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS (see ON OUR COVER and pages 3-8 this issue) plus a 12-issue subscription to LSR for the ridiculously low price of \$6.00.

b) If you are a subscriber, you may re-subscribe and take advantage of this offer. Our prices are going up to \$5.00 for 12 issues with LSR #28, so you'll be saving money by acting now, before #28 comes out.

c) If you just plain don't want to subscribe at all, send us \$4.50 and we'll grudgingly send you the record (and probably beg you to subscribe). Prices to record and book stores are \$3.10 per album, CASH IN ADVANCE! Koerner, Ray, and Glover may be booked for concerts, club dates, etc., through LSR ... Our sincerest congratulations to newlyweds John Cohen and Penny Seeger, now Mr. and Mrs. John Cohen ... The Second Annual

Philadelphia Folk Festival will be held September 6-8, and will feature, among others, Theo Bikel, Elizabeth Cotten, Jack Elliott, Bonnie Dobson, Mississippi John Hurt, Jimmy Martin, Jean Redpath, Almeda Riddle, Mike Seeger, Hobart Smith, Hedy West, and Dave Van Ronk. For further information, write: Festival Committee, Box 215, Philadelphia 5, Pa. ... Wedgely Todd has gone into the guitar-making business in San Francisco; he will soon come out with an 007 Regent's Park model, but the price will be high ... Florida folk music critic Jay Smith contributes the following on BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS: "...The most significant recording of recreated folk blues has just come out of the wilds of Saukville, Wisconsin (where Audiophile is located)...The album notes parallel this trio's work in folk blues with that of the New Lost City Ramblers in old-timey cuntry music. The comparison is valid. No other white singers have recorded so successfully in this field." Jay adds a witty remark about the album's cover (the same photo that graces this issue of LSR): "(Their) appearance on the cover gives the impression that they may be waiting for the noon train so that they can gun down Gary Cooper." ... That's all for this month, folks. Be sure to subscribe, order BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS, send us money, etc. And remember our new address: Box 1109, Minneapolis 40, Minn., 55440. (See you next month, ...)

### LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

(Wherein LSR receives bouquets, dodges brickbats, and unashamedly drops names.)

#### PRAISE FOR BARRY HANSEN ...

Dear Paul and Jon: Many thanks for issues 23, 24, and 25, all of which were most welcome, and for Barry Hansen's fair and even-tempered review of the Quattlebaum album on Bluesville. Hansen is, I am convinced, one of the most perceptive and sensitive critics writing about blues these days. His comments on the Tampa Red and the Sleepy John Estes releases in the same issue (24) are excellent and to the point. I continue to read Hansen with great pleasure: it is manifest he loves the music deeply and has no axe to grind. Best wishes,

PETE WELDING  
Chicago, Ill.

Editors' Note: Mr. Welding is an editor of DOWNBEAT.

#### PRO AND CON ...

Dear Sirs: I am a true folk crusader and would consider it an honor to subscribe to your rag.

BILL ROBINSON, JR.  
St. Louis, Mo.

Dear Editors: Wanted to tell you that I am able to read your humor magazine regularly and pass each copy on to several friends. We all get a lot of chuckles from it. But please don't misunderstand me. You see, we're not laughing with you.

BOB JENKINS  
San Francisco,  
Calif.

Editors' Note: Dear Bob: For an even bigger laugh, try looking in the mirror.

Dear Editors: Gladly here's \$3.00 for 12 more issues of the most enjoyable reading found today. I agree with your views fully so keep up the good work.

JAMES E. SEAFELDT  
Fort Eustis, Virginia

#### BLASPHEMY ABOUT WEDGELY ...

Sirs: Is this Wedgely Todd character (as I more and more am coming to believe) a figment of your imaginations? Nobody by that name...in any coffee houses around here, your advertisement to the contrary notwithstanding. (Secretly, we like your magazine.)

LSR READERS  
Cambridge, Mass.

Editors' Note: We bet you Harvard people don't even believe in Santa Claus.

#### P-FOR-PROTEST ...

Gentlemen: I've read the LSR since #5 with constant interest and general rapport, but with frequent puzzlement and occasional disgust.

I'm therefore pleased to be able to say, about your sermon in #25 to the "P-for-Protest" doggerel set, nothing more than HALLELUJAH, AMEN, BROTHER!

JIM SUTHERLAND  
Oxnard, Calif.

Gentlemen: ...I'm letting my subscription lapse, for what undoubtedly seems to you a poor reason: I can't stand the frustration of reading about all those records I can't afford to buy.

But I've enjoyed LSR and wish you well. ...And I did enjoy your issue-long editorial on protest songs. Yes. This is one of the basic fallacies in judgment. A case could be made out for Edgar A. Guest as a poet of real merit because so many of his observations of human nature were true and wise, if one could only forget that they were also expressed tritely and without distinction, with a shallow facility. And, of course, as you point out, these protest songs have nothing to do with folk music; they are contrived by non-folk (for what I mean by "folk," see Greenway) and enter no oral tradition except the incestuous one of the professional folksingers, in which Alan Lomax teaches a song to Burl

Ives, who teaches it to Pete Seeger, who teaches it to etc. A song could circulate endlessly through these performers without ever touching a folk. Best of luck,

S. J. SACKETT  
Hays, Kansas

Dear Sirs: ...I was particularly impressed by Sandy Paton's reply to Jim Hazard and the issue on Protest songs, both of which voiced my sentiments very well.

Thanks again for your contribution to a field that sorely needs a fresh outlook like yours. Sincerely yours,

CHARLES HOFFMAN  
Appleton, Wis.

Dear Sirs: On the whole, I find your magazine very enjoyable and useful, but I do find one small dislike.

When you refer to that "P is for Protest trash" I hope you are not referring to such fine songs as Malvina Reynold's WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO THE RAIN? and FROM WAY UP THERE, Bob Dylan's BALLAD OF DONALD WHITE, Pete Seeger's WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?, and John Brunner's THE H-BOMB'S THUNDER. These songs all have good tunes and plead their causes eloquently. They may not last, but they are a reliable reflection of the times...Yours,

JOSEPH C. KLEIN  
No address given.

Gentlemen: I have just finished reading LSR #25, your SPECIAL BIG PROTEST ISSUE, and cannot pass it by without a bravo, however belated. You have done a great service in pointing out the political naivete and literary incompetence of the "P-for-Protest...Pretentious, Portentous, and Ponderous" people.

...Indeed, there are things worth protesting...Yet there is an even greater danger, I feel, from sloppy thought on these subjects (social injustice, stock-piling of nuclear arms, etc.). And this is exactly what these P-for-Protest songs express.

Let those who would change our nuclear policy, those who would work for greater social justice, get themselves a background in political science, or sociology, or some other field with intellectual meat to it. Let them work and think and study. Let them seek employment in fields where they can effect some changes -- government, business, journalism, broadcasting, education. Let them prove the honesty of their concern by working in a less puerile manner to effect changes which they consider necessary.

...But most important of all, let them quit passing off their songs of Protest as folk songs...Folk songs are traditional songs...In a field which has been infringed upon by Tin Pan Alley, the chief concern of those of us involved with folk music should be the preservation of traditional folk



songs, performed in authentic traditional styles. If the Protesters have any serious scholarly interest in folk music, why don't they direct it toward genuine folk material? There is a world full of it, much of it unpreserved and unrecorded as yet. Sincerely,

MAURY BERNSTEIN  
Minneapolis, Minn.

Editors' Note: This month's final comment on Protest: Shortly after LSR #25, our SPECIAL BIG PROTEST ISSUE, hit the stands, Barry Hansen, our blues reviewer, sent us a new sheaf of reviews in an envelope addressed like this: "Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake, Editors & Publishers, LSR/ Filthy Reactionary Bourgeois Counter-revolutionary Anti-Negro Anti-Semitic Anti-Pacifist Warmongering Complacent Traditionalist Anti-Intellectual Rag/ Bpx 1109/Minneapolis 40, Minnesota." We protest!

#### ANOTHER COUNTRY HEARD FROM ...

Dear LSR: In a burst of gratitude for your not having mentioned me in the last few issues, I'm...subscribing. I wish you all the luck in the world, and if there's anything I can do to help, even if it means you will hate me the rest of your fiscal year, please let me know. I will believe in the need for your kind of acerbic prose even while you drop the guillotine

knife upon my head. Gently,  
OSCAR BRAND  
New York, New York

#### GOOD NEWS ...

Dear LSR: ...In New York over Easter I made a tape for Moe Asch for the Folkways label. Of course it may be months before it is out. Was reminded of DOWN IN A WILLOW GARDEN by a notice in a recent issue of LSR and so put it in. One of your most admiring readers,

HALLY WOOD STEPHENSON  
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico

Editors' Note: Good things are worth waiting for -- especially a new Hally Wood album. The admiration is most definitely mutual.

THE BEST OF JAY SMITH or  
WE'VE GOT A LIVE ONE HERE, FOLKS ...

Dear LSR: ...(I appeared on a TV show for the Florida Folk Festival.) When they called me and asked me to be on the TV show, I started to accept only on the condition that they ask Pete Seeger. Then I got to thinking. Seeger appears all over the country, and is planning a world tour. So far as I know he has never refused a booking because they hadn't hired me. I'm tired of that one-way street. I accepted the TV show invitation...Van Ronk is

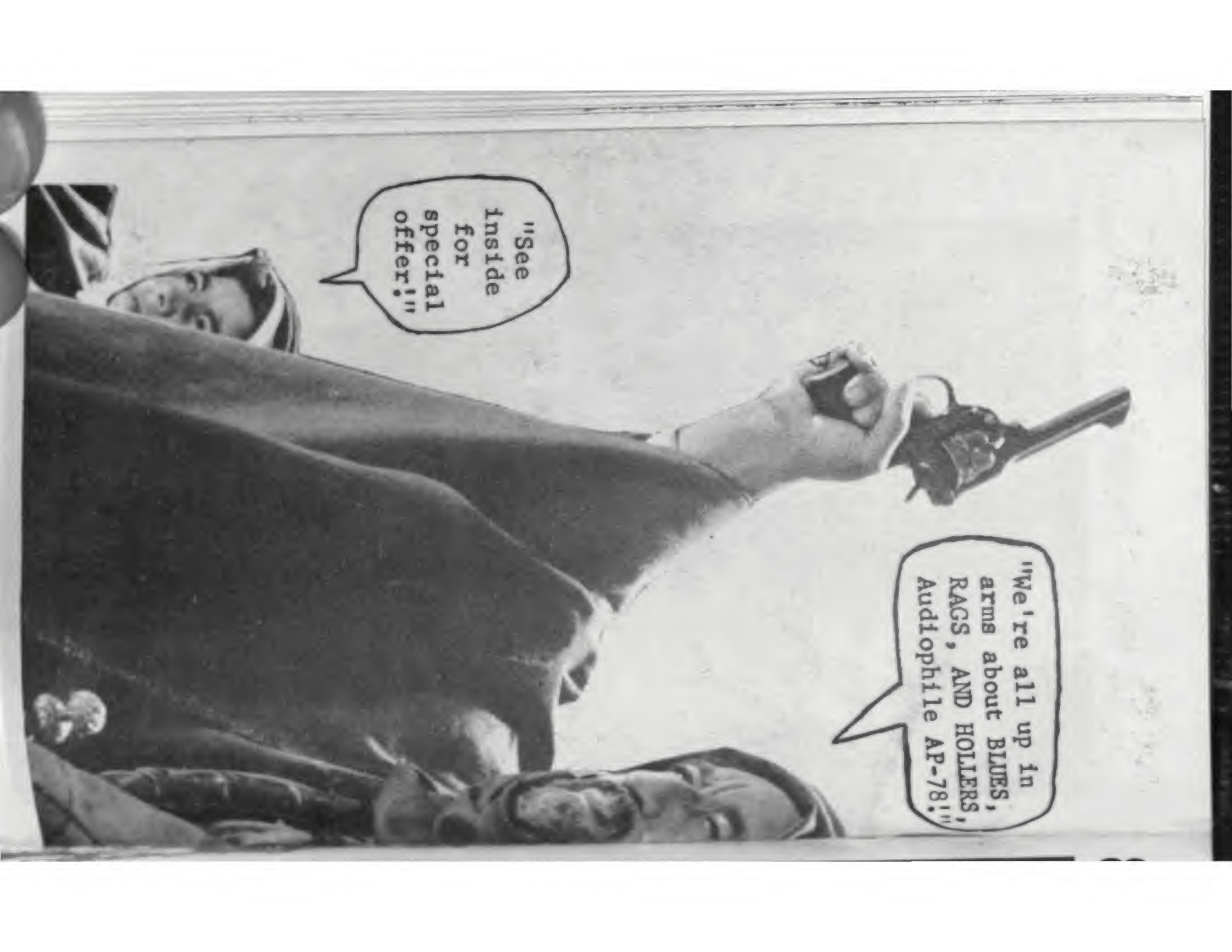
interesting but it doesn't do to play him and Gary Davis at the same sitting. I think it is a mistake to try to stress versatility in Gary Davis. His 12-string and harmonica work may be better than that of most people but it's far below his overwhelming 6-string work. Segovia can play flamenco but he won't do it in public...HOOTENANNY...(is)...certainly a mess...Is there a story on Dylan and Ed Sullivan? He was listed in TV GUIDE for last Sunday but he wasn't on (unless he appeared in drag). There was a person they called Brenda Lee who sounded just like him. Is Blind Boy Grunt REALLY Brenda Lee? Is Sonny Boy Williamson REALLY Sonny Boy Williamson? Which Joe Williams is Really Joe Williams? Are they both really Guinn "Big Boy" Williams? And what of Nat Pendleton?...Pete Welding, in a recent DOWN BEAT, raves about the Capital reissue of Leadbelly. As I remember, that magazine and METRONOME both panned the original 10" issue because he didn't sing mod-drun...I saw a record listing in a paper recently that had a song called PLENTY OF PASTURES... From George Crater's humor column in DOWN BEAT: "If I had a hammer, I'd really give it to Peter, Paul and what's-her-name!" ...Will "When I think of folk music, I always think of Burl Ives" soon be replaced with "When I think of folk music, I always think of Paul Stookey?" Verily,

JAY SMITH  
Jacksonville, Florida

!!\*\*#&\$\$



!!\*\*#&\$\$ CLEO, WE MUST SUBSCRIBE TO LSR THIS MONTH OR WE'LL HAVE TO PAY \$5.00 FOR 12 ISSUES NEXT TIME, AND WE JUST CAN'T AFFORD IT!!!!!!



"We're all up in  
arms about BLUES,  
RAGS, AND HOLLERS,  
Audiophile AP-78!"

"See  
inside  
for  
special  
offer!"

vol 2  
no 3



the little

sandy

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review

*Mr 200.5*



**JIMMIE TARLTON**

photo by Gurdon Wickham

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# EDITORIAL...

DE PROFUNDIS

Yes, confreres, once again out of the depths arises The Little Sandy Review, the perpetual mayfly of folk-music freemasonry. For, once again LSR has changed hands! Barry Hansen, after having successfully weathered

two issues, has concluded that his talents are more seemly in the halcyon glebe of contemporary electric music. But sustaining the incinerating passion for American traditional music forever within his breast he elected to deposit good old LSR in the right-minded, whole-souled, ever-lovin', blue-eyed hands of this magazine's new editors, David Polachek, Graham and Gurdon Wickham.

Lest you are suffering acute attacks of déjà vu, allow us to assure you that the three present collaborators have learned from the past errors of their ill-fated counterparts. We hereby vow to promulgate this promulgation on a strict bi-monthly basis. We realize that we will have to prove ourselves as to this point with our first issues. However, we editors are sure that eventually our faithful readers will once again be able to order subscriptions to LSR without fear that the journal is undertaking a precipitate journey to the Stygian shores.

Perhaps it would be meet at this time to circumlocute LSR's finite province of concentration within the space-time continuum. In other words we wish to reexamine the scope of LSR in terms of the contemporary musical scene. The editors feel that LSR's arena always has been and should continue to be, basically, American traditional music, excluding jazz, plus those traditions that have contributed to or been influenced by this musical lump. There...we've said it! And, we're glad! Did you hear us?...Glad!

As its name implies, this journal has always concerned itself primarily with record reviews. Book reviews, articles, regular columns and features of interest will also be found on these pages. We will devote longer amounts of space to those books and records poorly covered in other promulgations. Shorter reviews will be devoted to those items well covered. Using our discretion as a yardstick, we will try to cover all the important records and books in the limited space available. We hope to cozen writers and reviewers from all parts of the country into our pitiless tentacles. But, America beware! We will never tolerate the epicene cant of a Dr. Pangloss to slink incomprehensibly beneath the mighty aegis of our beloved Little Sandy.

In closing, let us note that, though unsolicited manuscripts are welcomed, they cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-stamped undressed envelope.

#### A NOTE ON THE EDITORS AND EDITORS OF NOTE

David Polachek has long been an old-time banjo and country music enthusiast and is currently a member of an old-time string band. President of the University of California Los Angeles folksong club, he is closely involved with the activities of the Department of Folklore and the John Edwards Memorial Foundation (repository for material relating to commercially recorded American traditional music). He has also covered the L.A. folk music scene for U.C.L.A.'s Daily Bruin.

Graham Wickham, proficient banjo and fiddle player that he is, accumulates extra credit by playing solid old-time backup guitar. He also maintains an old-time 78 rpm record collection (something no red-blooded American boy should be without) an old-time wife and an old-time son in old-time Burbank. Graham has had vast previous experience in writing about old-time music for small publications and for record notes.

Gurdon Wickham, affectionately known as "Wick," has been an art student at Chouinard Art Institute, the Art Center School, Los Angeles Valley College and currently hopes to finish his education at San Fernando Valley State College (with a teaching credential in art, no less). His designs and drawings will grace the laureled pages of LSR and his editorial comments will liven up the same.

## MISSIVES



to The Little Sandy Review

The new issue of Little Sandy (2-2) has arrived. While I appreciate all of the kind things said about Sing Out, and while I consider our point of view fair game for any critic, I must register objection to one item that appeared in your piece: that we are "playing resolutely right into the hands of the scribes of the far right."

If there is one basic thing that I have tried to stand for in my life, and have tried to have Sing Out stand for in all its 16 years of publication, it is that we would never give a damn about the interpretations people placed upon our thoughts and actions. A publication cannot be

true to itself if it stops and says: "If I do this, will I be playing in-  
to the hands of that," etc. To me, that is impermissible compromise.  
In a way, it's like holding freedom riders responsible for police bru-  
tality, or Jews responsible for the extremes of Nazism.

Sincerely,  
IRWIN SILBER

"US FOLKIES..."

I was rather disappointed by the new direction of LSR as by the qual-  
ity of the reviews which seem to me inferior to those of the Pankake-  
Nelson-Hansen days. Certainly, the folk-pop dichotomy is not as black-  
white as it was several years ago and some of today's urban popular mu-  
sic is worth attention by us folkies. But why in a review magazine that  
was dedicated to stable criticism of folk music, an area still very ac-  
tive and a good distance esthetically from today's fast moving \$ R&R  
freak-outscene.

LSR, by being folk music oriented filled a real need not filled by pol-  
itically oriented Sing Out, but has now lost some of that value. It  
seems to be following rather than leading in times when strong orien-  
tation or direction is rare and valuable.

But if you must review aspects of the so called "contemporary scene,"  
some of the best and most folk-oriented singer-writers are such people as  
Bill Monroe, Muddy Waters, Otis Redding, Chuck Berry, Roger Miller, George  
Jones, B.B. King, James Brown, Buck Owens, etc... Each more worthy of our  
attention (both as artists and as being folk-based) than the Beatles and  
Stones combined yet were not mentioned in this issue of LSR...

Sincerely,  
MIKE SEEGER

to The Little Sandy Review

Regarding your remarks about recording electric blues bands in the last  
LSR (2-2): I thought the name of the recording engineer who recorded the  
Johnny Young Arhoolie rang a bell, and sure enough it did. I checked on  
the back of the Junior Wells album on Delmark and saw it had been record-  
ed by the same fellow—Stu Black, Sound Studios. Apparently, then, the  
engineer gives the sound the A&R man wants, which throws the thing right  
back into Bob Kester's face, doesn't it?

Thought you'd be interested in this, and I pass the observation along  
for what it's worth. Keep up the good work. The second issue was a lot  
better than the first one.

Sincerely,  
RICH WARREN

ACRID ALACRITY FROM A READER

(Ed. note: The following was written in a pseudo-senile scrawl)

I'm getting older, so much so that I might not be able to write these letters or mail a cherished subscription. Anyway if you'd be kind enough, please send my next issue and the remaining to the nearest home for the aged...What's the matter with you—don't you have any dedication or are you just trying to be sadistic? I get that way when I think of all the money you have (mine) which is going to waste. Let's hit the key folks or I'll round up Sandy Revier subscribers and we'll revolt or something just as drastic.

Your Friend,  
SANDY KOLESNIK



MESSIN WITH THE KIDS...A brief report on Berkeley, 1967...by DP

Growth and change is a function of living things, and this should apply to musical forms as well as organisms. A constant charge hurled against enthusiasts of traditional music is that the old music is only played by old men, dying, antiques. Anyone who slavishly copied their styles could not be a musical artist but a mere antiquarian: a lover of things for their age, their nostalgic value. The true musician, these critics say, looks ahead, changes, creates, and does not copy old 78's.

Folk festivals, and especially the Berkeley Folk Festival, are this problem. For the past ten years the Berkeley festival has included traditional artists and citybillies who copied traditional styles. A surprise to some, but less astounding on inspection was the inclusion of four rock bands (not blues, rock bands) on the festival roster. The general reaction was, "What has this to do with folk music?" The unexpected answer was, "Certainly more to do with folk music than Phil Ochs or Glenn Yarborough."

For the fact is that many of these rock-and-roll musthaves were city-billy folkniks at one time. Remember those weird pictures of Jim McGuinn accompanying the Chad Mitchell Trio? Or Barry McGuire in the New Christy Minstrels? I retain old images, dark and dusty like attic photos, of two members of the Kaleidoscope in an old-time and bluegrass band. Another member of the same group placing at the Topanga Banjo and Fiddle contest with his version of GOING DOWN LEE HIGHWAY. Dave Cohen of the Fish trading



blues breaks with Dave Cohen of LA in the Ash Grove's front room. The citybillies have gone rock, but — took what they learned from the country. They are treating tunes like OH DEATH, THE CRUEL MOTHER, COUNTRY BLUES and THE CHICKOO with far more understanding and success than "folk" groups like the Kingston Trio were able to do.

"This year we decided the heck with definitions, we are going to explore the borders of what's being experimented."

-Barry Olivier, founder and  
director, Berkeley  
Folk Festival

And what becomes of the traditional artist? Used up, is he? Cast by the wayside? Strangely, the opposite is the case. The New Lost City Ramblers may never be booked at Berkeley's Avalon Ballroom, but Mance Lipscomb was, during the Festival weekend (July 1-4). Jimmie Tarlton perhaps received less applause than Country Joe and the Fish, but he was at least as well as received as Richie Havens whose involvement with traditional music must be purely coincidental.

And what is the reaction of the traditional artists themselves to the new variations and uses of their music? Largely, traditional musicians find it difficult to relate to music so completely outside their frame of reference. The common complaints of "too loud" and "fuss and feathers" show that most of the older musicians simply cannot accept such new directions as an electric band doing old-time music much less the Stockhausen derived sounds of The Red Crayola.

During the Songwriters' Workshop JimmieTarlton's style was compared and contrasted to that of Paul Arnold and Richie Haven's modern grooves. Tarlton's reaction was predictable...he fell asleep.

Contrariwise, most of the oldtimers encourage younger musicians to develop their own styles. Obviously, (and here's the point) some should be original within the tradition. And such progress, I think, is possible for both citybilly and traditional performer. Men like Jimmie Tarlton and Rev. Gary Davis are constantly adding to and changing their repertoire even at their advanced age. Men like Tracy Schwarz, Pete Rowen and Al Wilson have shown that the citybilly can master the rural style and extend it to the point of originality without breaking the bounds of the traditional style.

Berkeley was, first of all, a most enjoyable festival, and, contrary to outraged first glances, it was quite justified in stepping along with the rising tide.

SEE PHOTOS ON PAGE 53



Last year, LP record sales in markets, drugstores, etc. accounted for over 46% of total LP sales, or 106 million LP's. Of these, I estimate about half to be of the low-priced "budget-line" variety.

It is difficult to conceive of a grander waste of money. I am concerned now not with the \$1.98 line of reputable record companies budget labels (Camden, Harmony, etc.) but with the lesser known labels which are not listed in the Schwann catalogue, are not carried by most record stores, and are characterized generally by low fidelity, misleading covers, and the absence of liner notes. The truth of the matter—which is realized only after one has purchased 50 of such losers at the inviting price of \$1.39, 88¢ or even 59¢—is that most people cannot afford these records.

There are, however, in the field of traditionally-oriented country music, a handful of discs that are worthy of being sought. The purpose of this article is to apprise LSR readers of some of those pearls.

Historically, the most important such item to appear is Grand Ole Opry: Past and Present (Hilltop JM-5022). Six of the ten tracks are by modern country stars; the remaining four are by Uncle Jimmy Thompson, the Tennessee fiddler who was the first performer on the Opry when it opened on November 9, 1925. Two of the numbers, originally issued by Columbia in late 1927, are fiddle tunes, accompanied tastefully on piano by Uncle Jimmie's niece, Mrs. Eva Thompson Jones. Traditionalists needn't scoff at piano accompaniment, as it is quite proper throughout the North and down through the Southwest into Texas. The other two tracks, issued by Vocalion in late 1930, sound like unrehearsed interviews with musical examples. Uncle Jimmie is of considerable interest as a fiddler, since he is possible to earliest-born Southerner to record, and his style is probably indicative of fiddle music of the 1860's.

In the realm of bluegrass, without a doubt the finest 89¢ item is Hooper's Swanee: A Bluegrass Special (Design DLP 613) featuring John Duffey and the Country Gentlemen. Happily, this is not one of those disappointments that has one or two tracks by the featured stars and the rest by some ersatz heavy-handed brother pluckers. The selections range from the melifluous arrangements of 500 MILES, PALLET ON THE FLOOR and KATY DEAR, at which the Country Gentlemen are outdone by none save the Osborne Brothers, to showpieces for the mandolin and banjo virtuosity of John Duffey and Eddie Adcock (EDDIE ON THE FREEWAY and RED WING). 500 MILES is an onslaught of sentimentality, but for some reason is still a delight to hear. This is surely one of the best bluegrass albums available.

Budget LP's by unknown artists are usually disasters, but the Year Past is a fine exception. The foursome consists presumably of father, mother, son and daughter, of whom the last three contribute vocals. The daughter is the vocal star of the group, possessing one of those pre-teen

country voices that combines simplicity with effortless control, and is always a delight to listen to. Her mother, also an excellent singer, is more in the style of Maybelle Carter. Instrumentalization, utilizing guitar, dobro, electric guitar, fiddle, mandolin, and banjo (both finger and flat picked) is the loose-knit style that is still called bluegrass for want of a better term. Blue Grass Gospels (Crown CST 337), jacketed under a cover that looks as if it were designed for a Cecil B. DeMille spectacular, seems to have been their first LP and features 14 well-known gospel numbers of which WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN, FARTHER ALONG, GREAT SPECKLED BIRD and LIFE'S RAILWAY TO HEAVEN are probably the best. On the following three LP's their instrumental backup is considerably more tight: The Great Wear Family (Rural Rhythm 123) includes versions of KATY DEAR, PALLET ON THE FLOOR and KNOXVILLE GIRL that sound as if they were learned the Country Gentlemen disc earlier cited. Also included are some century-old favorites (CAMPTOWN RACES, YELLOW ROSE OF TEXAS, GOOBER PEAS and OH SUSANNA). Add 13 more items to round out a score of traditional ballads, sentimental songs and other hillbilly standards. The Wear Family (Rural Rhythm 122) is largely instrumental and perhaps a little weaker than the others, since their primary talent is singing rather than playing. But all are thoroughly good listening and strongly recommended.

Lovers of cowboy and western music will find a wide range of selections among the budget LP's. By and large, a duller corpus of music cannot be imagined. However, one record just manages to rise above the level of the soporific: Western Songs and Gunfighter Ballads (Crown CLP 5233). Credited to one Rex Wells, this record in reality features the Willis Brothers on one side and Tompall and the Glasser Brothers on the other. The older ballads are presented with a more lively country-and-western accompaniment than they usually get. MR. STAGGERLY, BUCKIN' BRONCO, GAMBELIN' MAN, JACK O' DIAMONDS, and BLACK JACK DAVID are among the twelve selections.

If your local market doesn't carry these records among the budget-priced nyloons or in the glassware department, they can be obtained through Uncle Jim O' Neal, Box A, Arcadia, California, 91008.

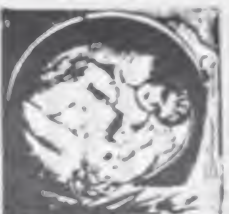
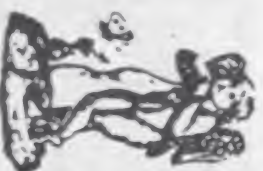
#### WORTH QUOTING...

"Aren't there a lot of people  
of...of...HILLBILLY stock in  
L.A.?"

-Anonymous interviewer  
for L.A. weekly  
The Closed Mind



# THE JOHN FAHEY COLLECTANEA



Child 736, The Waxfield Incident, has, for many years, troubled many scholars. Its basis in fact lies, according to Professor Child, in an incident which took place on Waxfield Farm, Bodle, St. Green, Sussex, England, on July 4, 1635. Child adduces the following evidence for the temporal and spatial coordinates of this incident: In the obituary section of The Manchester Guardian, July 6, 1635, there is this entry:

"Jenny SCAGG aige 47 deceased yeere the LOORD 1635 of a braked nekk received after Falleing intoo am emtee welle put upon the Fenne."

Prof. Child assumes that, in lieu of other information (which has hitherto not appeared), this section of the obituary is sufficient to explain the well known stanzas of the ballad and to assign them his postulated time and place. The best known stanza in question is, of course:

"L. Org Jenny, Org Jenny, grow grown in the gllell,  
today.

For then, for then, for then Yourght flight in  
the fen toswell,

Toswell, toswell, toswell, toswell."

The stanzas, of course, follow the familiar Sandhog, quarter horse quatrains structure, which has, of course, been traced to Medieval times—a further argument in favor of the antiquity of this ballad. (It is well known of course, that only one variant of this ballad has ever been recovered anywhere; and it is further well known only because scholars have attached so much significance to its hitherto undecipherable Sino-aramiansaren syntactical structure. The present writer must confess his interest in the ballad for the same reason.)

Recently, however, this writer has received information from the Great and Isaih Nettles Volkemusikinstitution, through my devoted correspondent Mr. Michael Carp. (I'm sure we are all familiar with Mr. Carp's magnificent 890 page dissertation, "ThePlace of the Wandering Jew in American Bilhilly Music.") Mr. Carp recently discovered (he confesses quite by accident) in the archives of the S.J. Taggart Memorial Foundation Library a curious document, dated Sept. 35, 1876. Unfortunately, portions of the document were damaged during the Battle of Boston, and, therefore, we do not have it in its entirety. From the EVENTING MORNINGSTAR, Sept. 35, 1876, published at Scapperville, Md. (USA) (Italian my own):

"The testimony of Eliga P. Scagg, Court of Enquiry...Tragic Death of January the Horse...The Testimony of Theonius P. Skag before FNV Court of Enquiry, Judge A.J. Jarboe: "i took her hand and we slowly walked down the beaten path to the old well i threw her in and suddenly there was an echoy splash and she sunk to the bottom of the old well she was the only friend i ever had poor jenny how we ran threw hills and dejes and i rode her down streams and up streams and the same with mountains and poor jenny she just couldnt take it do you think i rode her too hard i dont after all a hoss is a hoss nuthin better than a 4 legged critter to do all the work she werent equal so what i dont care anywho so i go to the chair for murderin poor old jenny after all i dint do nothin than you wouldnt have done you all wisht for poor old jenny to die i werent the guilty one you all hate horses you all like automobiles you killed poor old jenny just as much as i did hell i didnt want to admit it but i killed poor old jenny and she in reality was a second cousin on my nothers side (Ed. note—second parallel cousin according to contemporary familial schemes) i wasnt ashamed of her cause she alla time wor the same feedbag and she had no personalitiy she was just like a hoss no matter how i tried to change she insisted on wearing last years hat and when we went to a fancy place to eat jenny always had to order oats i mean you cloudnt bring a chick like jenny home to your mother anyway we all eat meat in my house harr harr harr i am glad jenny died we sho eat a lotta meat this week... (Ed. note—there is a break in the manuscript at this point, and the concluding fragments will be published in LSR, vol. 2, #4)



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# RECORDS



CLAWHAMMER BANJO County 701 \*\*\*\*

County Records, which has produced a justly praised set of old-time releases, started its contemporary "700" series with this disc.

In order to avoid confusion in names, the term "clawhammer" banjo refers here to that style also known variously as frailing, framing, rapping, banging, beating and double-noting. It is the old-time style of banjo playing where the fingernail picks the strings with a downward motion.

Most of the performances on this record are quite good, leading off with Wade Ward, perhaps the best of the old-time banjo pickers alive today. He plays one strong tune, **TUNE APPLE** and one beautifully wistful piece called **JOHN LOVER'S GONE**. Wade's inventiveness, solid yet exciting rhythm and crystal-clarity give him few living equals on the five-string.

Kyle Creed, from North Carolina, plays a similar style to Wade. His numbers are a fascinating **DARLING NELLIE GRAY** (with beautiful interpolations of the fifth string as a melody note) and a lovely tune called **DUCKS ON THE MILLPOND**.

Kyle's friend, Fred Cockerhan, plays in much rougher fashion on the fretless banjo. His **PRETTY LITTLE MISS** seems to be related to **JOHN BROWN'S DREAM** and **LITTLE RABBIT**. A fine **LITTLE MAGGIE** and a highly personalized version of **TRAIN 45** with the title **LONG STEEL RAIL** round out the side. (**LONG STEEL RAIL** uses the unusual tuning-SAACD!)

On side 2, Fred and Kyle play banjo-fiddle duets in the finest tradition of the old-time music. The selections are **STEP BACK CINDY**, **BIG-EYED RABBIT**, and a **JOHN HENRY** that is like no other I have heard. The tune may be related to the more popular version but this is not readily discernable. The combination of cleanly-picked banjo and good fiddle is surely one of the most beautiful sounds in all of American country music. These cuts are splendid examples of this wonderful style.

After having said so many good things about the record it pains me to speak harshly, but I'm afraid I must. Charlie and Tina Sawrot and Tom Whitmore have recorded a good album generally, but fully half of side 2 is given over to the playing of George Stoneman (cousin of the legendary Ernest V. "Pop" Stoneman). He was included, so say the notes, for the distinctiveness of his style. Stoneman's style is distinctive, all right, as he plays so crudely that his tunes cannot be identified by the objective listener. He brushes with such maddening and monotonous regular-

ity as to completely obscure the melodic line. Country would have done much better to include more of Wade Ward's picking. Better still, I would have liked to heard more of Kyle Creed, a fine banjo picker unrecorded elsewhere.

The notes are quite competent (all the banjo tunings included, thank God!) except for a curious blindness to Stoneman's faults as a banjo-picker. The cover art, by William Reimann, is excellent.

DP

THE LEGEND OF CLARK KESSINGER Folk Promotions FP 828 \*\*\*\*\*  
(Ed. note: Since the writing of this review, the Folk Promotions label has become the Kanawha label, under its same owner, Ken Davidson. This identical disc is also obtainable on the Folkways label.)

It is not invariably a musical revelation when some old timer who used to be a prominent recording artist is "rediscovered" and brought out of obscurity into the limelight of the folk music world. Twenty or thirty years usually take their toll and the singer or instrumentalist struggles in vain to recapture the skills he once possessed. There are, of course, some happy exceptions, and West Virginia fiddler Clark Kessinger is an outstanding one.

In the mid-1920's Clark, accompanied by his nephew Luches Kessinger on guitar (they called themselves the Kessinger Brothers), had a radio program in Charleston. In the Spring of 1928, they traveled to Ashland, Kentucky, and recorded 14 fiddle tunes for Brunswick records. In the next 2½ years they recorded at least another 56 tunes for Brunswick in New York. No more records followed, although Kessinger continued to make occasional appearances at various local fiddler's conventions.

In 1964, on a tip from collector Gus Meade, Ken Davidson found Kessinger making his living as a house painter in St. Albans, W. Va., and persuaded him to attend the Folk Music Festival at Pulaski, Va. Kessinger won first place. A year later the material for this record was recorded, with Kessinger accompanied by guitarist Gene Meade and banjo player Wayne Houser, both from North Carolina. In the past two years, Kessinger has taken first place in fiddler's contests at Galax, Va., Richwood, Va., and (what is probably this nation's largest) at Weiser, Idaho.

Ken Davidson is to be complimented for producing this excellent album, a worthy successor to three earlier outstanding releases on this small label. Liner notes by Gus Meade include a brief biographical sketch, short annotations for each of the 18 tunes, and an almost complete discography of the Kessinger Brothers' Brunswick recordings. The technical quality of the recording is likewise excellent. As for Kessinger's fiddling, it well deserves the first prizes he has won across the country. His intonation and timing are flawless, and each tune is a showcase for

his rich, ornamental style. The hard driving breakdowns and hornpipes hardly bound like the creations of a 69 year-old fiddler. The beautifully controlled WEDNESDAY NIGHT WALTZ and OVER THE WAVES show that, like most country fiddlers, he relished the old country waltzes.

The Sorruge-style banjo accompaniment is neither praise- nor blameworthy. Gene Meade demonstrates considerable technical proficiency at flat-pick guitar work. Unlike most pickers, his bass-runs are performed on a single string, rather than moving from string to string in first position. This gives his fast and hard picking a particular punch. Unfortunately, I understand his fancy picking has also earned him the disapproval of many fiddlers, who feel he tends to upstage those he backs up. There is a tendency toward this on the Kessinger LP, but fortunately Clark Kessinger is too good to be upstaged.

A comparison of Kessinger today with his records of 35 years ago shows clearly that he has improved with age. Matching CHICKEN IN THE BARNYARD or HELL AMONG THE YEARLINGS with the Brunswick discs of 1928-1930 shows that his tonal quality has improvedm his playing is more highly ornamented, and his pace is somewhat brisker. On the other hand, his waltzes are about 50% slower on the current versions. Listeners interested in making the comparisons themselves can obtain two reissues of the early Kessingers Brothers' recordings: RAGTIME ANNIE, one of the tunes on this present disc, has been reissued on County 507; RAY CHEESE UNDER THE HILL has been reissued on County 503.

Some fiddlers feel that there is a definite West Virginia fiddling style, as evidenced in the old time fiddling of artists such as Kessinger, Reese Jarvis and Sherman Lawson. However, the more modern accompaniment of this recent disc-or perhaps just the breakdown of regional characteristics due to mass communications--has obliterated the local style.

I do regret that the liner notes did not provide more biographical data. Space seems to have been at a premium. I was amused to see Gus Meade refer to himself as an "old-time music critique."

Norman Cohen

JOHN JACKSON BLUES AND COUNTRY DANCE TUNES FROM VIRGINIA Arhoolie P1025 \*\*\*

This entertainer plays his guitar in a number of different styles but is mainly influenced by the East coast two and three finger picking styles which have been nicknamed "Cotten-picking" after the legendary Elizabeth Cotten. In Jackson's style there is no choking of the strings, though Jackson was probably, at one time, quite proficient at it. But he stopped playing for several years and this album is more a documentary of his present condition than of top-notch playing. Jackson's singing, on the other hand, is quite pleasant and relaxed. Also, he is fairly adept at playing the banjo (frailing style) on such songs as "If Eddie Manns Ta," "Cindy," etc. He can also pick tunes in the Maybelle Carter guitar style ("Bad Man").



Despite what the record notes say, the truth is that when he was a youth he heard a lot of "race" and "hillbilly" records and liked them, learning to play from many of them. He was especially fond of Mississippi John Hurt (Okeh artist) and a couple of years ago saw an advertisement in a Washington D.C. newspaper announcing the appearance of Hurt. Jackson came to D.C. to see Hurt in quite a state of excitement, as he believed that Hurt had died years previously. There, at the now defunct Ontario Place, Jackson was "discovered" by some of the local folkblinks. I give this information for a specific reason: very few other Negroes, country or city, came to see John Hurt. But Jackson, is not afflicted by three diseases which most of his friends are: 1) fear of being considered an Uncle Tom because he likes old music as well as new, 2) the "triple" terror (Jackson's baroque duple is a delight, 3) the Chicago catastrophe (a taste for big, loud bands).

Unfortunately, Chris Strachwitz who produced the record has little taste, and, consequently, more than half the record consists of rehashes (sometimes quite good, i.e. "Steamboat Whistle" from Roy Acuff, "Poor Boy" from Barbecue Bob) of older 78 rpm recorded performances. Of much more interest are such songs as "Going Down in Georgia on a Horn," and "Boat's Up the River," both of which have commercial analogues in the late 1920's, though Jackson's performance of them vary to a sufficient extent (textually and musically) that this reviewer believes that they were learned from oral tradition. At this point, Strachwitz characteristically displays his lack of taste, for if Strachwitz had attempted to elicit more songs from Jackson which Jackson had not learned from old records, this record would probably be much better. As it is, there are at least four cuts on it which make it worth buying. I wish I could say really worth buying, for this entertainer needs encouragement to 1) practice his guitar playing (his singing is fine) and 2) to enlarge and concentrate upon songs he learned from his friends when he was young. Were he to do this he would be a first rate musician. I certainly hope he will, as he is young enough to do so.

John faney

BLIND BOY FULLER with Sonny Terry and Bull City Red Blues Classics 11  
\*\*\*\*\*

Blind Boy Fuller was one of the most influential fingerpicking blues singers of the East Coast. His singing and guitar style are superb. Some of his best work were the sides he cut with Sonny Terry and Bull City Red. Unfortunately, his recordings have been hard to get a hold of; collectors had to trade tapes of the 78's jealously, and there was a now defunct reissue album. This Blues Classics release is now the Blind Boy Fuller reissue available, and every cut is a five star cut.

SHAKE IT BABY is a wonderful raggy piece as is JITTERBUG RAG. CARELESS LOVE has been too often recorded, yet Fuller's version demands new attention. The blues style he is so famous for is also well represented on this record

by PISTOL SLAPPER, RED RIVER BLUES, and THREE BALL BLUES. The other cuts also display a range of blues singing and guitar picking as well as the musically solid accompaniment of such musicians as Terry and Red.

Everyone who has ever heard of Blind Boy Fuller should rush out and buy this one.

-Mike Birnbaum

MANCE LIPSCOMB VOL. #3 - TEXAS SONGSTER IN A LIVE PERFORMANCE

\*\*\*\*\* Arhoolie F 1026

There are some performers who seem unable to make anything but five star records, and Mance Lipscomb must certainly head the list. The 73 year young songster from Navasota, Texas, has put forth fourteen more songs on record for the public. As with all of Mance's work, each song is a jewel in itself. TAKE ME BACK BABE, a very early song is performed by Mance as it had been performed by rural Negroes at the turn of the century.

KNOCKING DOWN WINDOWS is another song which dates back at least before 1900. SHINE ON HARVEST MOON is an old show tune which achieved widespread popularity, passing into oral tradition. Mance's version while following the song's original feeling has an added raggy flavor and is put into a whole new context by Mance's guitar arrangement. Some people say Mance's version sounds like a whole new song. Mance has a phenomenal ability ability to take a simple song like IT AIN'T COME RAIN NO MORE or HEEL AND TOE POLKA or POLLY WOLLY DOODLE ALL DAY and make exciting jumpy numbers out of them.

Other songs on the record are blues such as BIG BOSS MAN, BLUES IN G, TELL ME WHERE YOU STAY LAST NIGHT. An old banjo folk song, WILLIE POOR BOY is combined with WHOA, KULE on the record in a wonderful open G guitar (played banjo style) song.

Mance says YOU GONNA QUIT ME is his wife's song, and when I visited him in Navasota she proved it by dancing when he started to play it. MAMA DON'T DOG ME is another song which borders on a blues but which receives ragtimey feeling from Mance. Finally on the record are NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE and MOTHERLESS CHILDREN played knife-blade style in open D tuning. Mance learned these songs in church, and when the legendary Blind Willie Johnson came through Navasota, Mance liked the bottleneck style. Mance remembers Blind Willie Johnson as a "good songster but not much of a guitar picker—I tuned his guitar for him." I played Mance a tape of Blind Willie and he recognized the voice immediately and remarked the guitar was much better. (Blind Willie probably recorded ten years after his visit to Navasota.) MOTHERLESS CHILDREN is one of Mance's favorite songs, and he has a real personal involvement with the song. Folk tradition now has it that when Mance played this song at the Berkeley Folk Festival in 1961 the police stopped him because it was too emotional and the people couldn't take it.

Although the recording conditions of a live performance are less than ideal, the music and songs make this record a vital addition to the folk

music enthusiast's collection.

-Mike Birnbaum

OTIS SPANN—NOBODY KNOWS MY TROUBLES      Testament T-2211      \*\*\*

This collection finds Spann in considerably better voice than on his *Asastrous* (vocally) Vanguard performance, but the strained and husky vocal quality which devastated the Vanguard cuts is still present in sufficient quantity to prevent him from attaining a high rank as vocalist. Spann seems to have suffered much the same fate as Little Walter in this regard, for while both showed great ability on their mid-1950's vocal performance (in Spann's case, but one released side), today both sing in voices which appear to be, in varying degrees, battle-scarred to a degree surprising in men still on the near side of 40 (Little Walter's singing on the Chess "Super Blues" extravaganza is an unmitigated catastrophe). Perhaps life in the ghetto is much more taxing to the well-being of the human animal than even the seemingly dismal scene in the rural South. At any rate, Spann's recent heart attack was, for me, (considering the Vanguard cuts), a dismaying but not surprising event.

There are five band cuts and nine solo piano cuts, the latter including VICKSBURG BLUES (with added drummer), played in the traditional Little Brother Montgomery style, and a pair of excellent boogie-woogie pieces, SPANN'S BOOGIE WOOGIE and YOU CAN'T HIDE. The latter an eighth-note boogie woogie with a vocal, features Spann at his rhythmic best. However, this is not one of the more exciting of the recent Chicago blues releases and is definitely not an essential purchase.

-Al Wilson

On June 2, 1967, Clarence "Tom" Ashley died of cancer at Winston-Salem Hospital, North Carolina. He was buried in Mountain City, Tennessee, his lifelong home. He was born in 1895 and while still a young man became an accomplished banjo and guitar player. From 1928-1951, with different musicians, he recorded over seventy songs. He was rediscovered and rerecorded in the early 1960's and became one of the best known traditional musicians of the folk revival. It was through him that we have come to know the fine musicianship of Fred Price, Clint Howard and Doc Watson.

One of Tom Ashley's close friends and fellow musicians was Dock Walsh. Dock died on May 28, 1967 at Wilkes General Hospital, North Carolina, and was buried at the Lewis Fork Baptist Church in Wilkes County, N.C. Dock was born in 1901 and learned to play banjo in his boyhood. He met Tom Ashley in 1925 and they became lifelong friends. They recorded with Garley Foster as "The Carolina Tar Heels" for the Victor Record Company. Dock was also recorded alone by Victor and Columbia.

We extend our regrets and condolences to the families and friends of both men as well as to all those who knew and loved their music.

Pirated, small label reissues of hillbilly and blues 78's have been a challenge to the large "legal" record companies. Until recently, these companies have been unresponsive to these "bootleg" items. Now, at last they seem to be picking up the gauntlet, and their efforts have been remarkably good on the whole. RCA's Vintage Series has been the most consistently fine of the "legal" reissues, and this particular album is one of its three LP's of hillbilly music. RCA has certain advantages over the pirated labels by virtue of their access to more discographical data, and better engineering equipment. They also have wisely chosen to leave the notes and selection of material to knowledgeable and competent experts like Ed Kahn, Fred Hoepfner, and Archie Green (who worked on this album) instead of the usual irritating, ignorant and fumbling hacks.

The songs on this record generally fall into three broad categories: native American ballads involving the railroad, lyric songs using railroad-connected imagery, and instrumentals meant to imitate the sound of the steam locomotive.

I'll take up the last type first, as it is generally the least of the pieces considered solely as music. A classic example of this is Byron

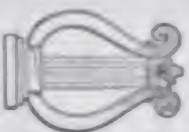
## INSTRUMENTS ? INSTRUMENTS !

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Parker and his Mountaineers' PEANUT SPECIAL. Except for a few, repeated bars, Homer Sherrill's fine fiddle limits itself to one repetitive phrase, giving the impression of the locomotive's drivers. The rest of the band contributes hap-hazard comments, informing us as to what the train is doing and offers us the sound of the airbrakes. This cut is strictly for fun. Slightly more interesting is THE DAVIS LIMITED starring Jimmy Davis (another show biz governor). I found his old time conductor's spiel quite charming and Buddy Jones plays some nice cross-harp at the beginning. If you find Davis' monologues a gas you'll like this. If not, too bad. Palmer McCabe's MC ABBE'S RAILROAD PEECE more seriously attempts to make a synthesis between train imitations and music. By extensive imitation of a train's lonely whistle, McCabe manages to include some soul sounds along with the drivers, the air brakes and so forth. His technical skill and breath control are nothing short of amazing, however, and his train sounds are so right that no verbal explanation is supplied or necessary. Fine as this piece is, the Rouse Brothers' original version of ORANGE BLOSSOM SPECIAL far overshadows the others in the genre and indeed all other versions of this popular fiddle piece. If you have become tired as I have of the show-offy inabilities displayed by most modern fiddlers when playing this showcase piece, you will be agreeably astounded by Ervin Rouse's technical and tasteful mastery of his own composition. The second part, always a drag, is here played with more good notes and cleaner than ever were attempted by later fiddlers. Two of the fine verses are included, and the brothers sing in fine, cutting, close harmony. A small carp: brother Jack's guitar backup cannot always hack the pace of Ervin's fiddle.

The ballads on this record deal mostly with railroad disasters of one kind or another and most of the items selected are classics. Surely the Carter Family's ENGINE ONE FORTY-THREE is one of the best train wreck ballads ever. (Incidentally, contrary to the notes, otherwise fine, A.P. Carter does not play steel guitar on this, or any other, Carter Family side.) Blind Alfred Reed composed many fine songs, among them WRECK OF THE VIRGINIAN. It is a good example of a local "vulgar" ballad, though slightly below a giant like the Carter Family ballad. Reed sings and accompanies himself on the fiddle in a stark, archaic style, somewhat akin to G. B. Grayson's OMIT WISE, with fewer double stops.

Charles and Paul Johnson, although they have a snappy overall sound, are definitely working with second-rate material in THE CRIME OF THE D'AUTREMONT BROTHERS. This train-robbers ballad has its charm, though, if you have patience with it.

The famous team of G. B. Grayson and Henry Whitter are represented by a sentimental ballad, THE RED AND GREEN SIGNAL LIGHTS. The song itself is in the same groove as HE'S COMING TO US DEAD and THE DREAM OF THE MINER'S CHILD, and other rather literary ballads that entered tradition. This one gives us a chance to hear a fine Tennessee singer and fiddler, Grayson, who

produced some real monuments in traditional recordings, i.e., OMBE WISE, I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A RAMBLER. Henry Whitter comes up with a remarkably competent guitar backup—for Henry Whitter.

The inclusion of Vernon Dalhart's WRECK OF THE OLD 97 might well be questioned if it weren't for the fact that it was so important and influential a release. It is far from great music, because Dalhart's voice and style are much more suited to light opera (his first calling) than to country music (by our city-oriented standards). Marlon T. "Vernon Dalhart" Slaughter's high, falsely nasal, city-trained and rather quavery voice is almost wholly inadequate for the music he is attempting to perform as far as city fans of traditional music are concerned. But the fact remains that over 7,000,000 copies of the original disc were sold, and a



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very large percentage of that to rural people.

The lyric songs comprise the lion's share of numbers (7 out of 16) and are some of the most musically exciting items on this reissue. Among the dulls, however, are, it pains me to say, "Haywire Mac" McClintock's *JERRY GO AND THE TRAT CAR* (in phony Irish dialect, yet!). Mac certainly did nicer railroad songs, however, this is an important side as it is the only early commercial recording of this important song, and it represents about the only example of Irish railroading song in Victor's files. Also in the uninspired vein is Paul Wernack's Gully Jumpers' *THE LITTLE RED CABOOSE BEHIND THE TRAIN*, a parody of *THE LITTLE LOG CABIN IN THE LANE*. But this particular side is just not clever enough nor musically interesting enough to be a really good item.

The Delmore Brothers, Alton and Rabon, produce a slick, close, studied harmony version of *THE WABASH CANNONBALL*. Titled, simply, *THE CANNONBALL* this song has polish but little emotion, certainly less than the Carters' rendition. Again, the Delmores have done better things.

So much for knocking. The Carolina Tar Heels come through with their usual whimsy that initially enchants one. One should look deeper, however and locate the tragic sense of life that lies at the root of all good traditional music. Garley Foster's lovely harp was never better, though sometimes more in evidence.

The Monroe Brothers' *NINE POUND HAMMER IS TOO HEAVY* is far too great a classic to want touting by this reviewer. It suffices to note its excellence and to point out the remarkable difference between this music and the bluegrass that was to spring out of brother Bill's forehead a few years later.

The Tennessean Ramblers (named for their first recording location at Bristol, a town lying on the border of *TENNESSEE* and *VIRGINIA*) were Jimmie Rodgers' pre-recording days back-up string band. They are remarkably beautiful, fine and tight on their own, producing a contrast between Jack Pierce's high, limited but very tasteful fiddle and Claude Grant's vocal. On this cut, at least, the Tennessean Ramblers use *IF I DIE A RAILROAD MAN* to prove that they are in the top ten of the old-time string bands.

With *THE LONGEST TRAIN*, however, Mainer's Mountaineers have produced one of the finest old-time string band performances ever waxed. The most remarkable feature of the song is the arrangement which plays off a double-time 2/4 backup against the slow 3/4 of the vocal and fiddle. This technique, which avoids a dull, plodding waltz tempo and, at the same time, produces great emotional tension, is identical to the solution used by Buell Kazee in his all-time great recording of *THE WAGONER'S LAD*. The Mainer text, tune, fiddle part and back-up are all very superior on this song, but it is the harmony on the chorus which sends the shivers along the parasympathetic nervous system. The chorus harmony is just unutterably beautiful and it makes this cut worth the whole record.

This record belongs in every collection of old-time music. Don't tape it; nothing discourages further reissues as much as poor sales.

-DP

J. E. MAINER'S CRAZY MOUNTAINEERS Old-Timey LP 106 \*\*

Once again, Chris Strachwitz has somehow managed to issue a bland sampling of what was sometimes an exciting string band. This disc features songs recorded in the 1930's by J. E. Mainer's Mountaineers, one of the most popular of the older country bands. Basically, North Carolinian Mainer organized a country band (J. E.-fiddle, brother Wade-banjo, and various others, usually Zeke Morris, filling in on guitar) when the commercial interest in this unamplified, un"jazzy" music was all but dead (their first recordings were not made until the middle of the 1930's).

The traditional material was virtually being ignored by the recording companies during this period, as they felt the public no longer wanted to hear LADY GAY, OLD JOE CLARK and I'LL RISE WHEN THE ROOSTER CROWS. The Mountaineers popularity, then, was based on the fact that they kept up with the popular country songs of their recording period; songs like MAPLE ON THE HILL, GREENBACK DOLLAR and SPARKLING BLUE EYES. For their source material, the band listened and learned from older country records, for the most part. They have done recreations of material originally recorded by Grayson and Whitter, Frank Hutchison, and, on this record, Blind Alfred Reed, The Carolina Tar Heels and The Carolina Twins. In addition they show strong influences from Jimmie Rodgers, the Carter Family and the Monroe Brothers. For my money, they are the Old Lost City Ramblers. Their major problem as a band, however, was that they never quite achieved a consistent sound and, as a consequence, strike many listeners as being quite bland when taken in large doses. Large doses like a 14 song LP. They copied so many other people, they never developed a real style and their music is never as exciting as their source versions. The Mainers stand as a transitional sound between old and new songs and styles in commercial country music. The photo on the album cover points this idea up well. We see the Mountaineers (Southerners) in front of a radio mike (Northern commercial intruders) wearing semi-cowboy outfits! They are a true transitional amalgam of successful sounds and styles of the 1930's.

In the field of dance music the band often excelled. In fact these numbers are the best on the record. DON'T GET TROUBLE IN YOUR MIND is a lively dance tune where different band members take turns at the vocals. KISS ME CINDY is slightly less exciting, in which J. E. imitates the sound of a kiss with his fiddle bow. The last of these dance tunes is a rather comglomerate, frenetic song called 7 $\frac{1}{2}$  (no, not 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ -7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ). Played at lightning speed with Wade's three-fingered banjo contributing strongly, one realizes that bluegrass has its roots deep in traditional country music.



The largest share of songs is in the field of pop-country tunes of the 30's. They range from dull, MAPLE ON THE HILL, to repetitive, SPARKLING BLUE EYES #2, to downright irritating, ANSWER TO GREENBACK DOLLAR. On the latter tune, George Morris and Leonard Stokes (who often recorded as a duet with nothing to do with the Mainers' band, as they are here) perform in an uninspired, unexciting guitar-mandolin combination with the latter instrument played torturously. For the most part, these songs are re-hashes and rerehashes of what were basically dull tunes. It was common practice to follow a hit song, like GREENBACK DOLLAR, with sequels such as THE ANSWER TO GREENBACK DOLLAR, NEW GREENBACK DOLLAR, GREENBACK DOLLAR #2, GREENBACK DOLLAR #3, NEW ANSWER TO GREENBACK DOLLAR #4, etc. The Mainers seem to have gotten increasingly tired with themselves as their career advanced.

Two other groups of songs need be mentioned, and these are the sentimental and gospel songs, some of them being part of older oral tradition. Again, these range from the average, WE WILL MISS HIM which is a version of the Civil War VACANT CHAIR, to the somewhat interesting, OVER IN THE GLORY-LAND and CHANGE ALL AROUND, to the real drags like WRITE A LETTER TO MOTHER. It readily becomes clear that on non-dance numbers the band's real forte was close, slick sometimes jazzy harmony. Delivered sans emotion, it at first enchants the listener, and then weaves its soporific spell.

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Also in this group is this band's rendering of Blind Alfred Reed's successful Victor disc **WHY DO YOU BOB YOUR HAIR GIRLS?** But the Mainers' lack of moral interest (Reed's motivation in recording the song was religious conviction) here produces a record sadly lacking in emotional impact. One example of Reed's work may be heard on Victor's **RAILROAD IN FOLKSONG** album, elsewhere reviewed in this magazine. One can quickly discover what emotion can be imparted by a singer who believes in what he sings about.

On this album, Strachwitz is plagued by a lack of taste. The selection of titles is poor, though representative to a degree (which does not say much for the Mainer band). The remastering is abysmal for two reasons. First, the recording engineer must have been hovering over the volume control like the angel of death, because several times the songs rise and fall considerably in volume. Second, several of the original discs were in inexcusable shape (inexcusable because better copies were readily available to Strachwitz). The notes are essentially J.E.'s autobiography (good) but Strachwitz offers no explanation about the songs (bad). Chris promises a second volume, as a sequel to this album (**NEW ANSWER TO J.E. MAINER'S CRAZY MOUNTAINERS #2**, perchance?) in the near future, but if it is anything like the first, it might be most judicious if Chris simply save all that vinyl.

-CW

#### THE STANLEY BROTHERS ON WANGO RECORDS

\*\*\*\*

Two issues ago, LSR reviewed a reissue LP of the first recordings made by the Stanley Brothers. Originally issued on the obscure Rich-R-Tone label in the late 1940's, the records have been difficult to obtain and highly prized by collectors and bluegrass aficionados. Because of the recent untimely death of Carter Stanley—the first major loss in the field of bluegrass—the records discussed here are among the last of the Stanley brothers' recordings. Like their first recordings, these are also on an obscure label—Wango Records—and I suspect that they will also be avidly sought after in years to come.

Three of the LP's by the Stanleys on Wango are credited to John's Gospel Quartet and the four to John's Country Quartet. This talented foursome consists of Ralph and Carter Stanley, George Shuffler and Jack Cook. Most of the numbers are done by some smaller subset of this group. In some cases a fiddle is added to banjo and guitars.

Wango #103 consists of 13 well-known gospel numbers including **THE OLD CROSSROADS**, **DRETTING TOO FAR FROM THE SHORE**, **UNCLOUDY DAY**, **LOVELY TOMBS**, and **AMAZING GRACE**. Ralph Stanley, Shuffler and Cook take turns at lead, with instrumental breaks by Ralph on banjo and Shuffler on guitar. The highlight of the album is **PRECIOUS MEMORIES**, probably the finest rendition of this song on record. Also prize-worthy are **I AM A PILGRIM**, with solo by Ralph and Travis-style guitar breaks by Shuffler, and **A BEAUTIFUL LIFE**, with lead vocal by Cook. Members such as the latter remind us that Cook was one of the best lead singers Bill Monroe ever had.

Wango #104, by John's Country Quartet, contains 16 titles, almost all traditional or previously recorded hillbilly pieces. WILL YOU MISS ME WHEN I'M GONE features excellent lead by Ralph and good McReynolds style guitar breaks by Snuffler. Also outstanding is EAST VIRGINIA BLUES, a duet by the Stanleys, and noteworthy for a very unusual text that includes parts of the ballad "Silver Lagger." This album features Carter Stanley a good deal more than the previous one—in fact, if Carter was present at all on #103 it was only on quartet numbers. Snuffler does more guitar work on this LP—mostly in the flatpick style that he has been using on recent Stanley Brothers issues on the King label, but also some in a damped finger-picking style. Unfortunately, with few exceptions his flat-pick work sounds a bit too mechanical and rigid, and relies too heavily on rapidly repeated melody notes, rather than demonstrating any interesting decorations. Other familiar titles include NINE POUND HAMMER, WILDWOOD FLOWER, WILD AND RECKLESS HOBO, and PRETTY POLLY. The latter number affords an interesting comparison with Ralph's Columbia recording of the same song and points out the differences between the style of John's Country/Gospel Quartet and the more commercial Stanley Brothers and the Clinch Mountain Boys ventures.

The most distinctive trait of these Wango recordings is Ralph's and Carter's singing styles. Ralph has always been known for his tense and harsh nasal quality, but on these JC/GQ numbers he brings the style out more vividly and impressively, demonstrating some of the finest traditional mountain singing. All the standard vocal ornamentations and decorations are used to advantage, including scoops, slides rising and falling attacks and releases and multiple grace notes. Carter, who is usually associated with a more bland and undecorated style sometimes approaching Lester Flatt in extent of relaxation, proves that he too can excel at a more ornate traditional style.

JC/GQ also makes extensive use of the fine singing of George Snuffler, whose vocal quality sounds eerily like Doc Watson's. Add to these the occasional voice of Jack Cook and one has an excellent reservoir of singers from which to draw. On the negative side, the vocals are sometimes marred by a lack of balance and even tonal uncertainty, as if the songs were not carefully rehearsed—which is probably the case. The choice of instruments (usually banjo and one or two guitars) fails to provide the full sound or usual instrumental interplay of a standard bluegrass band. Ralph's three-finger banjo playing is relatively free of the Scruggs clichés that are the stock in trade of most bluegrass banjoists. Finally, the repertoire of JC/GQ sets them apart from the other recent Stanley Brothers' albums, which though each LP still usually has 3 or 4 traditional numbers, consist mostly of modern country-western and bluegrass numbers.

Both Wango #105 and #106 feature 13 popular gospel numbers. On these LP's a fiddle is often added, but to no advantage, as the fiddler is singularly lacking in style or creativity.

As a final question, are these records bluegrass? The reviewer cited in the beginning of this article felt that the Stanley Brothers were not performing bluegrass. Definitions of bluegrass range from any country music played with a Scruggs banjo to only that music imitative of Monroe's Blue Grass Boys of 1945-48. A definition can vary depending on the purpose to which it is put, but definitions at either of the above extremes have exceeded the limits of usefulness. I suspect that most objective criteria of bluegrass music that can be met by some particular bluegrass band will not be fulfilled by that same band performing a sacred number. Do we profit by such a proliferation of terminology? A brief review, such as this, cannot undertake to examine this problem in detail.

Mango records come sans jackets and can be ordered through County Records Sales, 311 E 37th St., New York 11, for \$5.50 each.

Norman Cohen

STEEL GUITAR RAG Jimmie Tarlton Testament T-3302 \*\*\*\*\*

The finding and re-recording of pioneer country artists has reached quite an advanced level. Already we have such illustrious musicians of the past Arthur Smith, the McGee Brothers, Clark Kessinger, E.V. "Pop" Stoneman, Bill Cox and Buell Kazee. But few can match the excitement and artistry, cleverness and ingenuity displayed by South Carolinian Jimmie Tarlton. Jimmie is a product of no one region, save the South as a whole. His music is a conglomeration of Anglo-American country and pop tunes and balladry fit to a very personal, heavily Negro-influenced steel guitar accompaniment. I use the last word of that sentence loosely, as in many occasions it is the voice that accompanies his guitar. Jimmie was truly a pioneer musician well establishing the steel guitar as a potent country instrument and giving to tradition such previously little-known songs as BIRMINGHAM JAIL and COLUMBUS STOCKADE BLUES.

With Georgian Tom Darby, Jim began a life-long career in commercial country music in Atlanta in 1927, at the age of 34. Today, Darby is bitter, suspicious and his musical talents have all but disintegrated, unfortunately. But Tarlton's music and singing have only improved and this record gives one an all too short appreciation of this easily provable fact.

Tarlton's background reveals a strong tradition of Anglo-American balladry. This is represented on this record by an interesting JOE BOWERS and a very beautiful, tasteful BARKS OF THE OHIO. The latter song bears the personal Tarlton stamp as Jimmie has inserted himself into the story that this song tells. The prize ballad of the record is his classic LOVE BONNIE, a version of YOUNG HUNTING. His earlier version recorded for Columbia in 1930 is well known to record collectors, but Tarlton has since reverted to an older tune and has added a sense of subtlety that only the years can produce. If this were the only cut available on this disc, it would be more than worth it.

Though balladry is one of Jimmie's strong points, it is the blues that is

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his real calling. Jimmie has managed to record one of the most interesting and inventive versions of JOHN HENRY, a song that can be rather tiring. On PUT-TOGETHER BLUES Jimmie lets his sense of soul and instrumental improvisation create a fascinating, fantastically exciting blues instrumental. His knowledge of the range and possibilities of the unamplified steel guitar is shown to excellence. With FORT BENNING BLUES and ADMINISTRATION BLUES (an FDR song) Jimmie reveals his talents as a song writer and blues singer. Each verse and every guitar break are varied and individual. His one offering of a gospel song is almost a purely Negro version of his own AIN'T IT A SIN TO GAMBLE ON SUNDAY. This has to be one of the most moving blues-gospel songs yet recorded.

Other songs worth mentioning are STEEL GUITAR RAG in which his fine sense of taste in steel guitar performance prevails. Jimmie's showmanship on stage is that of a pro and comes across in the reaction of the Ash Grove audience on this cut. JIMMIE'S ELDE HEAVEN is his version of the popular song MY ELDE HEAVEN. It is likewise a masterpiece of subtlety and professional polish.

This record of this fine musician must stand as one of the best on the market. We should all extend hearty thanks and appreciation in the direction of Eugene Earle whose guiding hand made this record the great documentary that it is. The song selection is well balanced, exciting and, yet, representative. The recordings themselves are all in the top ranks of "field" recordings.

The notes, by Ann Cohen, are quite good on the whole, though her underplay of the strong influence of Negro music on Tarlton is a rather outstanding fault. For the most part the notes are a short biography and equally short musical analysis. They are supposed to be some rather complete notes on the songs included as a brochure, but where are they? Apparently, Pete Welding has trouble getting to the printer on time.

Unfortunately, this record does not reveal several other sides of this performer. Jimmie also sings unaccompanied, plays the harmonica, frails and picks dance tunes, ballads and lyric songs on the banjo, and plays the steel banjo much like the guitar. It is the happy duty of this editor to report that there is definitely a second volume of Tarlton, recorded very recently, to be released in the future with healthy examples of all of these facets.

GM

MEMPHIS MINNIE VOL. 2 Blues Classics 13

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This album should appeal to many besides the hard core blues fans. Guitar players will find a treasure trove of new licks and ideas on these fourteen selections. Chris Strachwitz and Henry Vestine have chosen many of the finest blues that Memphis Minnie and her husband "Kansas Joe" McCoy recorded together from 1929-1935. All have two guitars on them, and Minnie is the vocalist on most. Although she probably isn't "the greatest

of all female blues singers ever to record," as the liner notes would have one believe, she was still very good.

The songs with the best vocals seem to have the best guitar work, as well. **CRAZY CRYING BLUES** is magnificent by any standard, as Kansas Joe's guitar sounds very close to his brother Charlie McCoy's playing. The subtle changes between duple and triple meters on this number along with Minnie's moaning and unrhymed stanzas make this one of the most exciting pieces I have heard in quite a while. Connoisseurs of the erotic in blues will also be pleased to know that the two most risque pieces on the album, **PREACHER'S BLUES** and **NEW DIRTY DOZEN** are among the best songs, musically, on the album. Kansas Joe and Minnie, respectively, deliver the vocals on these with real verve. In **I CALLED YOU THIS MORNING, WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH THE MILL**, and **SHE PUT ME OUTDOORS** we have three nice examples of the vocal duets for which these artists were famous. The last suffers somewhat from the fact that the two guitars are out of tune to one another. Blues lovers are by now familiar with instrumental imitations of trains, dogs, birds, fox and hounds, etc. Now at last in **FRANKIE JEAN** we have the imitation of a horse, that most neglected of beasts in blues lore. On of the artists, probably Minnie, plays bottleneck on **PICKING THE BLUES** and **PREACHER'S BLUES**. She is only adequate in this style.

There is quite a bit of variety on this album. If you want to hear guitar playing by two of the most accomplished blues artists from this period, this record is a must.

David Evans

CHICAGO BLUES---THE EARLY 1950's Blues Classics 8 \*\*\*\*\*  
DETROIT BLUES---THE EARLY 1950's Blues Classics 12 \*\*\*\*\*

In a real sense these two albums are beyond criticism, bringing together as they do, a number of important, germinal blues recordings of the postwar years. The decided value they possess as documents of an emerging, crystallizing blues style outweighs any imperfections in recorded sound, ensemble blend, etc. present in these performances. And there are, it must be admitted, a good number of roughnesses---the speed of the Johnny Young selection on the Chicago set is clearly incorrect (due to the original disc on the Ora Nelle label, cut in 1947 at the Maxwell Street Radio Shop) and has not been corrected in this LP release (a variable-speed turntable could have adjusted this easily enough); much the same is true of the Dr. Ross selection in the Detroit album. These are perhaps the most glaring but by no means the sole imperfections; many of the performances are very rough and could have benefitted from better recording techniques, better balance in the original recording situation, well tuned pianos, greater rehearsal time on the part of the musicians or retakes in the studio, etc., etc.

The influence of traditional Mississippi blues is most clearly demonstrated in the Chicago set, by such numbers as Baby Face Leroy Foster's BOLL WEEVIL and the two-part ROLLIN' AND TUMBLIN', made with Muddy Waters and Foster, guitars; Little Walter Jacobs, harmonica; and drums—the then Waters band (for some reason, however, the two parts of ROLLIN' AND TUMBLIN' are separated by several other tracks on this LP); by Floyd Jones' powerful DARK ROAD, an interesting adaptation of Tommy Johnson's BIG ROAD complex; by Homesick James Williamson's Elmore James-inflected HOMESICK and by the general ensemble approach developed in postwar Chicago by Waters, James, Jacobs, etc. This typical band approach is heard here on Junior Wells' HOODOO MAN, which features, in addition to Wells' vocal and swooping harmonica, guitarists Waters and David Miles, pianist Henry Gray, and drummer Fred Below (it's easily Junior's best record ever and reminds us how much we have lost since he has turned to rock-and-roll or whatever it is he is currently attempting so ineptly and—for the viewer—painfully); it's heard too on J.B. Hutto's DIM LIGHTS and TIMES ARE SO SLOW (a fine topical blues on lack of work opportunities in the Chicago of the postwar recession—a theme also treated in Snooky (Pryor) and Moody's (Jones) STOCKYARD BLUES and John Brim's TOUGH TIMES, Eddie Boyd's classic FIVE LONG YEARS and Little Walter's MUSKADINE, which employs a personnel similar to the Baby Face Leroy sides, with the important exception that Walter switches to guitar (I'm pretty sure, aurally, that it is he playing lead on the record)).

In addition, there are Little Willie Foster's FALLING RAIN BLUES with a funky knocked-out piano in the accompaniment (it may be Lazy Bill Lucas, whom it sounds like), the earlier-mentioned Johnny Young side MONEY TALKING WOMAN, which may be the earliest-recorded performance in the album, Big (Shakey) Walter Horton's best vocal effort HARD HEARTED WOMAN and singer-guitarist Robert Nighthawk's splendid KANSAS CITY BLUES, perhaps the least updated style heard on the album.

All in all, a fine, far-ranging set that documents some of the various styles to be heard in Chicago in the immediate postwar years. The music is of a high order, the lyrics consistently interesting, and a good amount of originality is evidenced in the work of the various artists.

It is the absence of this originality that makes the Detroit set a little less interesting for me. The four performances by singer-harmonica player Baby Boy Warren—that "Boy" is significant—how much too closely to the Sonny Boy Williamson line, as does L.C. Green in his REMEMBER WAY BACK, leading one to the inevitable conclusion that, their admitted vocal and instrumental skills aside, they were not very original. Bobo Jenkins' IO BELOW ZERO and BABY DON'T YOU WANT TO GO reveal his thorough grounding in Williamson as well. One String Sam's I NEED \$100 takes its impetus from STOCKYARD BLUES (as OOO BABY imitates Little Walter), but he is a magnificent artist, perhaps one of the most arresting and most primitive bluesmen ever to record—but I own that his is one of my favorite postwar



blues recordings, so I may be biased in his favor and, therefore, cannot be objective about it. One-man band Dr. Ross' THIRTY TWO TWENTY is representative of his work, but I must admit that I do not find Detroit Count's two-part rehearsal of various Hasting Street watering spots HASTING STREET OPERA particularly funny nor interesting from a musical point of view.

One of the more interesting items on the set is Brother Will Hairston's (The Hurricane of the Motor City, one of his records call him) ALABAMA BUS, which discourses on the Birmingham, Alabama, bus boycott led by Rev. Martin Luther King. Hairston has recorded perhaps more topical pieces dealing with the civil rights movement than any postwar singer, and someone should interview him in Detroit. This is, musically, his best recording, thanks to Washboard Willie's backing.

Then there's John Lee Hooker's HOUSE RENT BOOGIE, which I find very exciting due to his humming along with his free-form guitar lines, and the late Big Maceo Meriwether's BIG CITY BLUES, a respectable but scarcely spectacular example of this singer-pianist's work.

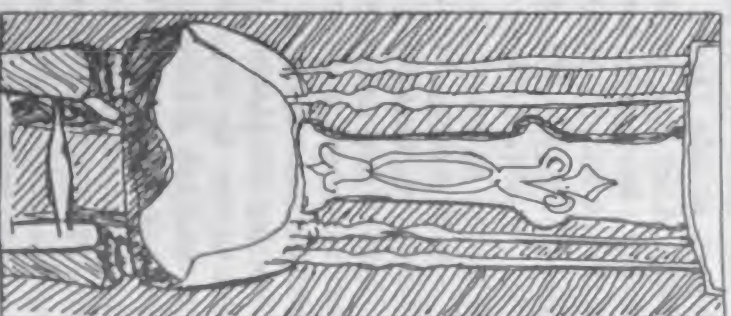
The Detroit set is, in the whole, of less interest than the Chicago material. The ensembles are not as precise or driving, but the biggest difference by far is the absence of any real spark of originality in the Detroit recordings. The two sets, taken together with various albums by Muddy, Wolf, Elmore James, Hooker, Sonny Boy Williamson #2, Little Walter etc., give one a pretty good idea of what was going on in Chicago and Detroit in those exciting days.

—Pete Welding

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These recordings, Sonny Boy's earliest, originally on the Trumpet label, are generally considered to be his best, surpassing his Chess recordings by a considerable margin. However, I don't find this collection to be superior to such a Chess LP as "Real Folk Blues", for while Sonny Boy is younger and in better voice here, there are many respects in which this LP is inferior to his late Chess recordings. Most importantly is that a large percentage of these early songs are shallow, jive items which are quite trivial. Occasionally, the brisk tempos employed here are favorably utilized with neat, rhythmic harp sorties in a riff style (as on COME BACK HOME), but generally these items are lacking in interest. Better, are the medium-speed shuffles which constitute nearly all the remainder of this LP, on which Sonny Boy's distinctive voice-harmonica phrasing, integration and flair for interesting lyrics are in evidence. However, one misses the slow tempos on which Sonny Boy later demonstrated great proficiency. His vocal conception on the harmonica is ideally suited to these slow tempos but on this collection only one slow song appears out of a total of sixteen. Finally, it must be mentioned that Williamson's band is indistinguished here, and the guitar playing is a good example of poor tonal quality used by many guitarists in the post-war amplified styles' emerging years.

This record, despite these drawbacks, contains two superb blues performances. NINE BELOW ZERO is the best of the medium shuffles, and is one of the finest examples of the spare, darting style he often employed on such material. MIGHTY LONG TIME, the one slow song, finds Williamson singing and playing beautifully with the sole accompaniment of bass, in a highly unusual performance notable for the high quality of the harmonica vibrato. However, I feel this record does not justify the many claims made for it, and in fact would recommend either of Sonny Boy's "Folk Blues" LP's on Chess in preference to this collection.

-Al Wilson

BIG JOE WILLIAMS: CLASSIC DELTA BLUES Milestone 3001

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This LP is based on an intriguing notion of producer Pete Welding -- call off the titles of some of the greatest Delta blues recordings and see which of them Big Joe picked up during his long active career, and see what he did with them. It is important to emphasize that Welding did not rob, fresh Big Joe's memory by playing any of the original recordings for him, for this key point is implicit in the notes but not clearly stated. This record is therefore an absolute must for the folkloristically inclined for its vital insights into the permutations of lyric in blues songs which have entered folk tradition. Here it is sufficient to note that Big Joe's lyrics on the Charley Patton songs are rather close to the originals,

particularly on PONY BLUES and BANTY ROOSTER BLUES, which were the two sides of Patton's best-selling record. On the Robert Johnson songs, however, he has retained only a few phrases around which he has constructed what are primarily new combinations of traditional lyrics in the miscellaneous category. In all, he does five of Patton's songs, four of Johnson's, and three associated with other bluesmen.

Big Joe started out in the early 1930's as a straight Delta bluesman utilizing duple meter and a modal, "one chord" guitar style, but by 1938 he had adopted the conventional triplet rhythms and three-chord approach which infested the blues of this period, and which he has since retained. As I prefer the former style (in which these pieces were originally performed) I naturally find these versions, generally done in triplets, much less interesting than the originals. A less subjective complaint lies in the repetitive nature of Big Joe's work. Whereas Patton took the nearly identical melodies of HIRD'S NEST BOUND, DIRT ROAD BLUES and BANTY ROOSTER BLUES and set them to three radically different and distinctive guitar parts, Big Joe runs them all through his three-chord open G concept, resulting in a diminishing return situation. This is strikingly the case on DIRT ROAD and Banty Rooster, consecutive cuts on this album, which are nearly indistinguishable in basic outline although they do contain some varying improvised filigrees in the guitar work.

Big Joe is a sloppy musical thinker. DIRT ROAD starts on a one-chord pattern but in the third chorus becomes a three-chord pattern which is then maintained until the end. This type of thing is rarer than you might think in primitive blues, and is indicative of a musical carelessness never encountered in the great figures of this style. More startling is PEA VINE, which starts in an excellent, romping 4/4 time, but speeds up to the point where Joe can no longer maintain the pace, at which point he lapses into an average of two thumb beats per bar rather than the previous four, all of which results in a total transformation into standard duple meter. Both halves of this weird evolution are fine, but they do not fit together. Play the first 10 seconds of this peice, and then skip to a point near the end of the song and it will seem inconceivable that both excerpts are from the same song.

Despite these gripes, Big Joe has compensating strengths, primarily in the rhythmic area in which his basic drive and rhythmic flexibility in improvising are notable. On ROLLIN' AND TUMBLIN' Joe rolls and tumbles very effectively in duple meter over Pete Welding's solid eight-to-the-bar bass line on second guitar. PONY BLUES is fine, and many other cuts have their moments. However, his bottleneck technique on two or three cuts here is putrid.

Williams now has over ten LP's out, and this LP is not one of the best. My money backs the Arkhoolie, the first Delmark and the Testament, and this Milestone LP is not recommended unless you own all of the above already. In which case you probably won't need it anyway. — Al Wilson



BLIND JOE DEATH'S FEET

The toes could be rutabagas,  
A gnarled steering-wheel  
Out of the porcine dresser drawer.  
Joe Death's feet corellating out of  
The library paste of his crustacean.  
Difficult to imagine the debauched  
Toes on the ten-string fiddle.  
Sometimes it's orange, bent,  
Creaking to the globular tome in  
The kraut tub.  
Difficult to debase the poor,  
Didactic woodblock. The obese  
Railsplitter out of the pachyderm  
And into the body's sealing wax  
The music's mound.

-Barclay Martyrs



photos by dave polacheck

Among the many varied personalities featured at the Berkeley Folk Festival, traditional performer Rev. Gary Davis (right) and folk-rock musician Country Joe of the Fish (left) typified the tenor of the event. (For article, "Messin' With the Kids" by DP, see pp. 4-5)

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**THE LITTLE SANDY  
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Mississippi John Hurt

Photograph by David Gahr

### RATINGS

|       |           |
|-------|-----------|
| *     | Poor      |
| **    | Fair      |
| ***   | Good      |
| ****  | Very Good |
| ***** | Excellent |

record reviews

PRESENTING MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT: FOLK SONGS AND BLUES  
(Piedmont 13157)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

The miracle happens once again; from out of the American past comes a voice long since believed silenced, its like not to be heard again. But there is Mississippi John Hurt on the stage at Newport, and here is a new LP of the legend who a year ago was only a name on faded recordings of the 1920s.

Often in our enthusiasm to honor the greatness of such rediscovered American artists, we tend to overstate and misrepresent, to make claims which in the cold light of reality are found to harm rather than enhance a man's accomplishments. Let's set the record straight at the beginning.

Mississippi John Hurt is not a blues man. To thus restrict the scope of his artistry is to do injustice to a man who is a living repository of an incredibly broad portion of the complete spectrum of the Negro folk tradition. Hurt, like Elizabeth Cotten (the similarity in vocal and guitar styles, as well as in repertoire, comes immediately to mind), is the creator and transmitter of Negro ragtime, ballads, lyric songs, breakdowns, and instrumentals as well as of blues. What is most incredible about Hurt's scope is that it was attained and preserved in the region of America that has produced the most singularly limited and intense new genre of national folk music in the last two generations, the violent, dark delta land centering about Clarksdale, Mississippi, the "capital" of the blues.

Living out his exile of obscurity in Avalon, only 50-odd miles from Clarksdale, Hurt seems to have remained an island of calm in the midst of the tension-ridden delta country. While his contemporaries were driven to produce the incredibly intense and visionary Clarksdale blues, that existential poetry in which all outer experience is validated only in its effect on the self at bay, Hurt has stood like an oak with a living and vital taproot, drawing from the diverse elements of Negro life the raw stuff of his art, viewing all from behind the dispassionate mask of the cultural interpreter. Hurt's songs are clearly country

music, and in them he looks back toward a calmer, simpler vision of life. All around him, the Clarksdale style (best exemplified by the music of Robert Johnson) became an obsession with the inner experience, essentially the problems of the future, urban and now familiar to the vast majority of Americans. Hurt's archaicism, his firm denial of the psychotic pressures of his vicious and restless homeland, are a great tribute to his strength of character and endurance. They are the ageless roots of folk music upon which the new styles nourish themselves (and sometimes destroy in the process).

We have also seen in print the statement that Mississippi John is now singing and playing as well or better than he did in his early recording days. This is, of course, intended as a compliment to the vigor retained by the artist, but, taken at face value, it is a denigration of the greatness of his early work. In all honesty, Hurt's fingers are now stiffer; his guitar rhythms lack their former sinuosity; his once rich and resonant voice is occasionally only an uncertain and husky whisper. These are truths, and are not reflections on Mississippi John, still a great artist at the age of 69. Rather, the need many feel to obscure his aging is a reflection on the lack of our failing tradition to produce another Hurt in the years since Mississippi John disappeared back into the delta country in 1929.

The chief delight in hearing Dick Spottswood's and Pete Kuykendall's recording of Hurt is in rejoicing, perhaps for the last time, in the now rare lyric vein of Negro music, long since vanished from the ken of the younger blues men. Who can ever again conceive and execute the beauty of LOUIS COLLINS, that loveliest of laments for a lost companion, or the nostalgia of MY CREOLE BELLE, a "moonlight and roses" song set to one of the most popular and best of all ragtime melodies?

CANDY MAN BLUES, a song which has been burlesqued all too often by Jack Elliott, is given to us once again as a meaningful and frankly erotic Negro experience, as is the rarely performed CASEY JONES, one of the few indigenous Negro ballads of America. JOE TURNER BLUES takes on added definition in Hurt's classic performance; the hated prison dick of long ago is here well on the way to becoming an

American Grendel, a folk memory of terror and oppression. RICHLAND WOMEN BLUES is rendered in a delightful Roaring Twenties jargon, Hurt recalling with fond associations the wild women and their "shingle-bob haircuts" of his youth. Hurt's harmonica medley surprisingly includes the mountain reel LIZA JANE, forgotten as a Negro song for the better part of a century, but the instrument is in an unfortunate key for his singing of GOD'S UNCHANGING HAND. The famous AVALON BLUES ("Avalon's my home town, always on my mind") and SALTY DOG are other high spots.

The magnificence of Mississippi John's LP is not an apex but rather an epilogue to his silent and lonely career as an artist, and its value in enabling us to establish him in our minds as a man rather than as a legend is inestimable. Connoisseurs of the mountain tradition will perhaps soon get the same opportunity with Dock Boggs, the great Virginia banjo player recently rediscovered by Mike Seeger. Men such as these are the last leaves of a forgotten America, much regretted and much missed; already the winds gather to carry them away.

(PRESENTING MISSISSIPPI JOHN HURT: FOLK SONGS AND BLUES can be obtained from Music Research, Inc., 2023 N. Woodstock St., Arlington 7, Virginia. \$5.00 plus 25¢ for postage.)

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

LIGHTNIN' HOPKINS: LIGHTNIN' AND COMPANY  
(Prestige Bluesville 1061)

Album Rating: \*\*½

Two tracks on this album are very much worth having. One is a very sensitive interpretation of Eddie Boyd's HAVE YOU EVER BEEN MISTREATED; the other is a mournful, moving instrumental that Lightnin' and harp man Billy Bizzor somehow develop out of the hillbilly specialty, MAMA BLUES. The rest is mainly new versions of earlier Lightnin' record hits (like MOJO HAND), with his Houston tavern band. The sidemen play amateurishly, and Lightnin', shall we say, doesn't extend himself.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JEAN RITCHIE AND DOC WATSON AT FOLK CITY (Folkways 2426)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

The combination of Jean Ritchie and Doc Watson seems a natural one considering the traits of gentle modesty, dignity, and fantastic vocal nuance that the two performers hold in common. From the first time they performed together, it seemed right and inevitable that they should combine talents in a duet recording. Jean doubly benefits from association with a good banjo picker or fiddler; in Kentucky days, she had an ear for the rowdy "town" songs as well as for the more refined family songs of her tradition. A really good accompanist (and Doc is the best) can goad her, eyes a-sparkle and feet tapping, into really cutting loose on the old murder ballads and hoedowns.

Handy Roger Sprung was on hand with his fiddle during Jean and Doc's stay at Folk City, and the three liven up proceedings between ballads and solos with SUGAR ON THE FLOOR and other high-stepping hoedowns. AMAZING GRACE and STORMS ARE ON THE OCEAN, the most thrilling and most often requested duets of the two during their Folk City stint, are the backbone of the album, while Doc cuts loose on the guitar on CRIPPLE CREEK (matching Sprung's banjo note for note) in the accustomed dizzying display of instrumental virtuosity that is his trademark. The anomalous concept of folk music in a Manhattan night club is given genuine definition in this album: with Jean and Doc on hand, it can and did happen.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

SAM AND KIRK MCGEE AND THE CROOK BROTHERS: OPRY OLD TIMERS  
(Starday 182)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

This fine album very nearly succeeds in turning back the clock to America's happiest era of string band music. The McGee Brothers are best known as Uncle Dave Macon's side-kicks, and they, like the Crooks Brothers (the only old-timey string band still appearing regularly on the Grand Old Opry), have been on the famous Tennessee radio show since

its inception 36 years ago. Although neither group has given in to show business pressure toward modernization and both continue to perform only traditional and old-timey songs, the performances heard here are in the full, blustering radio and stage show style, emphasizing projection at the expense of intimacy: there are no duets or solos by the McGees, and Sam's wonderful guitar work is lost in the racket of studio fiddle and string bass.

But until such time as both groups can be documented in an intimate, relaxed atmosphere, this album will demonstrate that the Crooks Brothers and Sam and Kirk McGee are still capable of first-rate old-timey music: nowhere else can one still hear such classic performances of great songs like RAGTIME ANNIE, MY GAL IS A Highborn Lady, COMING FROM THE BALL, and ROLL ALONG JORDAN.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

PETE FRANKLIN: GUITAR PETE'S BLUES  
(Prestige Bluesville 1068)

Album Rating: \*\*\*

Pete Franklin, an Indianapolis singer who plays both guitar and piano, reflects very strongly the influence of Indianapolis' Leroy Carr and Scrapper Blackwell in his playing. His guitar style quite effectively suggests Carr's rolling bass together with Blackwell's single-string runs, and his piano playing (although much less assured) is structurally very close to Carr's. His singing is a veritable melting pot of the blues of the 1930s and 1940s; he generally imitates the manner of the singers whose songs he sings, doing very creditable likenesses of Leroy Carr's more primitive style (PRISON BOUND) and, on the other hand, the highly-stylized manners of Doctor Clayton and Joe Pullum. But he doesn't make the imitations ends in themselves; he does have a semblance of an individual style which keeps him from sinking into mediocrity. The recording is off-mike at times, but generally adequate.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

**SUBSCRIBE NOW!**

KILBY SNOW, KENNETH AND NERIAH BENFIELD, AND ERNEST STONEMAN: MOUNTAIN MUSIC PLAYED ON THE AUTOHARP  
(Folkways 2365)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

Mike Seeger, whose performances are almost solely responsible for the current resurgence of interest in the old-time autoharp, has gone into the field to record the finest traditional specialists in the instrument, and the result is an album of such scope and authority that further documentation of the autoharp will probably be extraneous.

Kilby Snow of Independence, Virginia, the featured soloist on the disc, has taken the lowly autoharp to what are quite possibly its furthest limits. With an especially tuned instrument, he produces slides and note sequences not previously believed possible on this supposedly "simple" device. Hearing Snow reminds us of a comment Pete Seeger once made on the autoharp to the effect that the limits of any instrument are merely the limits of the musician playing it. From this, one might infer that Snow is a genius, and the inference would be hard to deny. In addition to the unbelievable complexity of his playing style, Snow has broadened the scope of the autoharp by devising beautiful arrangements of songs not usually associated with the instrument; his MULESKINNER BLUES sounds as natural to the autoharp as does his AIN'T GONNA WORK TOMORROW.

Kenneth and Neriah Benfield, while more conventional in their approach to the instrument, likewise offer some startling innovations in autoharp picking, notably the autoharp duet of SWEET MARIE played in octaves.

The rich, scratchy zing of the autoharp is admittedly tiresome over the space of a lengthy LP (even one designed for specialists), but Seeger has largely alleviated potential nodding on the part of his audience by interspersing occasional vocals and guitar and banjo accompaniments (one featuring Wade Ward on the banjo) with the instrumentals. The vocals, incidentally, are of extremely high quality for a record concentrating on instrumental accomplishment, and those with not the slightest interest in autoharp virtuosity will welcome the album for the vocals of Ernest "Pop" Stoneman, one of the all-time greats of old-timey music, as

he performs reprises of some of his classic early recordings.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

BILL JACKSON: LONG STEEL RAIL (Testament 201)

Album Rating: \*\*\*½

Pete Welding describes the first release on his Testament label as "the first extended sampling of the vigorous Negro folk music of Maryland." An inviting sampling it is, given by Bill Jackson, a 57-year-old "songster" who played extensively in the 1920s, but has apparently never been recorded before.

Jackson, a first-class finger picker and singer, gives evidence of a Maryland tradition closely allied with that of neighboring Virginia and North Carolina. Jackson resembles well-known singers from those states (Blind Boy Fuller, Carolina Slim, Pink Anderson) in his tendency toward a performance which is emotionally restrained, but very smoothly and richly conceived and executed, as opposed to the more directly emotional, less finished performances heard farther west. Jackson picks guitar in the standard E-A-D-G-B-E tuning, and in three keys, and with at least two fingers. He follows metrical patterns very carefully, with the characteristic Eastern SALTY DOG verse form sharing prominence with the 12-bar chorus. (As Welding notes, these tendencies assert the greater role that interaction with white musicians plays in Eastern Negro music, as compared with the Mississippi delta style. One might note in addition that Jackson uses many lyrics common to white singing.)

Although listeners will be intrigued by Jackson's unusual versions of FREIGHT TRAIN and TITANIC, his song stock is uneven in quality, and we will need more documentation to justify Welding's assertion of a "particularly rich and hardy" tradition in Maryland. But even when doing second-rate material, Jackson's sensitive singing and skillful guitar never fail to please. He gets an extraordinarily light and smooth sound from a much-maligned brand of 12-string (hear CARELESS LOVE and MOANING GUITAR). All guitarists interested in ragtime will want to hear him.

Testament Records are distributed by Delmark Records,

7 West Grand Avenue, Chicago 10, Illinois.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

THE CLANCY'S NEXT GENERATION ...

PEG AND BOBBY CLANCY: SONGS FROM IRELAND (Tradition 1045)

Album Rating: \*\*\*½

SO EARLY IN THE MORNING: IRISH CHILDREN'S TRADITIONAL SONGS, RHYMES, AND GAMES (Tradition 1034)

Album Rating: \*\*\*

The Robert Clancy family of County Tipperary, having given to the world the rollicking group of brothers who have made a success of purveying Irish whack-fol-the-diddle to a nation of self-styled Sons of Erin, now presents its "least 'uns," Bobby and Peg Clancy Power, for our approval on PEG AND BOBBY CLANCY. Although Peg and Bobby have thus far elected to remain on the home sod, their music is arranged and polished and accompanied in the careful manner their older brothers have established as a part of the American folk scene, and it is impossible to relate the very attractive performances of these two, with Peg's precise theater-trained diction and Bobby's smoothly accomplished coffee house guitar backing, to the tradition of such great singers as Mrs. Elizabeth Cronin. Whether the young Clancys have deliberately turned their backs on Hibernian tradition or whether their style is indicative of a general passing of the older musical ways is not indicated on the record or in the notes of Diane Hamilton. This is not to blow the critical whistle on Bobby and Peg as Gaelic folkniks; but merely to point out that their music (at least on the basis of this recording) is not a continuation of Irish tradition, but rather a refined derivation from it. At any rate, the two are most appealing and enjoyable to hear and ought to go over with American audiences as well as did the earlier Tradition releases of Liam, Pat, and Tom.

The Clancy grandchildren, although obviously rehearsed, coached, and accompanied by adults, are a genuine delight in a round of songs, games, and jingles in SO EARLY IN THE MORNING. The sound of 8- and 10-year-old voices thick with brogue chiming out songs of childhood's naive lyricism ("She was like a lady/She was like a queen/She was like a

lady/Off to the fair at Lynn") and innocent violence ("Paddy on the railway/Picking up stones/Along came the engine/And broke Paddy's nose") to rich, melodic Gaelic airs is a phenomenon difficult to deal with rationally. One does, however, feel closer to a realization of the Irish experience on such performances than with the more artfully contrived duets of Bobby and Peg. Such forthright sweetness as that exhibited by the Clancy grandchildren is rarely captured, as it is here, without a concession to preciousness.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

TALL TOM AND PINWOOD TOM: THE MALE BLUES, Volume 4  
(Collector JEL 5) An English EP.

Album Rating: \*\*½

Two obscure city blues singers from the early 1930s are heard on this reissue. Both are good examples of city style: emotional, but formalized and a bit stiff compared to the country blues; containing that certain sophistication which made many Negroes desert country blues for this form. Tall Tom, who performs agreeably with piano and clarinet, has been forgotten, but Pinewood Tom has achieved, since the '30s, a certain notoriety under his real name, Josh (ua) White. Here, he sings with his guitar and a piano. The most valuable asset of this record is that it shows the way Josh sang when he was singing for a Negro market, and the way he naturally sang and played before acquiring the broader view of music he picked up later on the night club circuit. Far from having been taught much by Blind Lemon Jefferson, as has been stated (and implied on the notes to this album), his style on these recordings, both vocally and instrumentally, is much indebted to that of Lonnie Johnson, a much more sophisticated performer. These recordings, made when White was barely out of his teens, should go a long way to squelch the notion that he was ever a primitive blues singer, and are essential for anyone really interested in the development of his style and technique.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

Good Things Happen To People Who Subscribe to LSR!

BOB GIBSON: WHERE I'M BOUND (Elektra 239)

Album Rating: \*½

BOB GIBSON AND BOB CAMP AT THE GATE OF HORN (Elektra 207)

Album Rating: \*

The musical career of Bob Gibson is something of a study in frustration. By now a veteran of the "folk music revival," Gibson has hopefully ridden various band wagons of the movement with an unvarying degree of success: fair to middling. In the late 1950s, a shirtsleeved Bob picked the long-neck banjo and led singing Carnegie Hall audiences in futile pursuit of the Great One. At the height of the Odetta craze, he produced an album of jivy blues and spirituals with slap bass accompaniment. Nothing.

GIBSON AND CAMP AT THE GATE OF HORN, with notes in the most nauseating pseudo-hip PLAYBOY manner by Shel Silverstein, dates from 1961, a period in which Gibson began composing his own folk songs, began appearing in night clubs wearing skinny Ivy League suits, and attempted a group sound in his embarrassing experiment with Bob Camp (about whom the less said the better). The more pleasing of Gibson's compositions of the period were picked up and carried to success by inferior, but more astutely managed, pop singers. Bob Camp was put out to pasture (one hopes he caught the MTA and "will never return"), and Gibson cast covetous eyes toward a new trend.

WHERE I'M BOUND, Gibson's newest album, finds a sweater-clad Bob "and his 12-string guitar" attempting to walk right in on the failing 12-string wagon (despite that fact that he has never learned to play the instrument worth two cents) with songs bearing the co-composer credit of the ubiquitous Silverstein, who apparently doesn't care how he makes his dough off the folk business, ridiculing it in cartoons and print or writing songs for it. Gibson's musical ideas, as always, are bright and catchy, but not vulgar enough to catch on with the junior high set; they will probably be lifted again by the predatory hootenanny set with the money and connections.

Tell you what let's do, Bob. Let's file this effort in the wastebasket and start all over again. First, you get yourself a corduroy cap, a pair of blue jeans, a flat-pick, and a harmonica-holder...

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

JIMMY REED SINGS THE BEST OF THE BLUES (Vee Jay 1072)

Album Rating: \*

Without knowing it, Vee Jay has given us a perfect textbook example of musical variation as it occurs in folk tradition. One of the chief causes of this variation is evident when a singer of restricted musical compass, like Jimmy Reed, tries to sing songs which lie outside that compass, like ST. LOUIS BLUES. Success and laziness have worn down Reed's performances, once original and exciting, into an unvarying formula into which he almost manages to cram eleven blues classics of diverse sorts (by Leroy Carr, Ma Rainey, Memphis Slim, etc.). I say almost because his struggles with the harmonies of ST. LOUIS BLUES approach the hilarious; most of these songs (truly great blues) emerge with hardly a struggle as bad Jimmy Reed tunes. One can only hope they don't go back into tradition this way.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

JESSE FULLER: GREATEST OF THE NEGRO MINSTRELS  
(Folk-Lyric 126)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

This album spotlights Jesse's singing and guitar playing; his full one-man band appears on only two selections. It gives a fine cross section of his vocal repertoire, including stage music, blues, and one of his famous knife-guitar spirituals.

The set opens with familiar Fuller high jinks on BILL BAILEY and CRAZY ABOUT A WOMAN, but soon turns to a more introspective mood which makes a nice contrast to his care-free Good Time Jazz albums. The blues come off especially well; NINETY-NINE YEARS, STRANGER'S BLUES, and CINCINNATI BLUES are the best blues he has recorded since his out-of-print Cavalier LP. They recreate beautifully the style and the spirit of the blues of the 1920s, many of which were made by songsters like Jesse. And there's hardly a songster anywhere on records who sounds younger than Jesse; his 67 years seem to cause him no problem at all.

Two more numbers deserve special comment: PREACHER LOW-

DOWN is as slanderous a "coon song" as ever came from a blackface stage, and here it is in Negro tradition! Folk Negroes may feel strongly about race relations and about music, but (unlike their Northern relatives) they rarely connect the two.

Also noteworthy is a new recording of Fuller's most famous song. Jesse new SAN FRANCISCO BAY BLUES isn't quite as spirited as the one he did a decade ago (now available only on a British Topic LP), but should, nonetheless, win him a host of new friends. That is, if they can get past the album jacket, which is, without a doubt, the ugliest one I have ever seen.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

THE OLD AND THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS ...

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS, Volume Five (Folkways 2395)  
Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: GONE TO THE COUNTRY  
(Folkways 2491)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: EARTH IS EARTH  
(Folkways 869) A 7" LP.

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

TOM PALEY, MIKE SEEGER, AND JOHN COHEN SING SONGS OF THE NEW  
LOST CITY RAMBLERS (Aravel 1005)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

Contrary to information appearing in LSR #27, Tom Paley's curtain call as a New Lost City Rambler is actually on the Group's NLCR, Volume Five, rapidly followed onto the market by GONE TO THE COUNTRY, featuring the debut of Tracy Schwarz as Paley's successor. Paley, the most extroverted and exuberant of the New Lost, takes with him a good deal of the group's image, for, in retrospect, the familiar tuning frenzy larded with quips and fantastic, corny word play that seemed so much a part of the Ramblers' presence can be seen to have originated primarily in his personality. The sophistication of the puns, alien to but oddly complementing the nature of the group's material, was also largely Paley-produced, and is no more.

Tom is also remarkable in that (alone among revivalists



of traditional styles) he stoutly refuses to allow the music to dominate or dictate his personality; in the pleasure, range, and esthetic success of his performances, we are tempted to feel that we can discern the secret of the model city folksinger of our time.

Paley receives a fine send-off in Volume Five, demonstrating his genius with the guitar on ROAD TO AUSTIN and JOHNSON CITY BLUES, and writing a glowing epitaph to his Rambler career with the lead singing on SAIL AWAY LADIES. From music hall spoof (BILL MORGAN AND HIS GAL) to religious rant (WHY DO YOU BOB YOUR HAIR, GIRLS?), the remainder of the album is what we have come to expect of the group: impeccable musicianship, outstanding material, and a correct and delightful state of mind about country music and country ways that is somehow felt rather than heard.

Mike Seeger adds an odd one, a baroque Irish ballad from Northern tradition, BOLD JACK DONAHUE, to the Rambler canon of unusual performances, and John Cohen continues his resurrection of the old-time modal mountain banjo styles with Dock Boggs' COUNTRY BLUES. John's performance of this song, as well as of the Boggs songs on GONE TO THE COUNTRY (DANVILLE GIRL and DOWN SOUTH BLUES), are not to be compared to the originals -- John is not competing with Dock, but rather attempting to carry his style on into another era -- and are not yet at a level of accomplishment which allows him to relax and stretch out within the song. Yet, these labored and somewhat uncomfortable performances are worth our close attention and encouragement for the very reason that John has cast caution into the winds in allowing us to witness his attempts to get inside the difficult and private art of another experience. John Updike's comment applies to Cohen as well as to J. D. Salinger: "...the willingness to risk excess on behalf of one's obsessions is what distinguishes artists from entertainers, and what makes some artists adventurers on behalf of us all."

Interest in GONE TO THE COUNTRY will quite naturally center around Tracy Schwarz, a young man who comes to the group firmly wearing his own shoes and with no intentions of stepping into another's. Although a veteran performer of more recent country music styles, Tracy is a newcomer to old-timey music. The nasal bite of his singing on this album indicates that he has come to grips with the problems of

NLCR performing since we last heard him, and his ability to sing in the hard, near-falsetto of Bill Monroe and Ralph Stanley has, as Cohen notes in the liner, moved the Ramblers chronological frontier forward about a decade; Rambler songs now include those of the 1940s. RAMBLER'S BLUES and LITTLE GLASS OF WINE are fine songs from this era, originated by groups still performing, but abandoned in favor of more saleable "Nashville" tunes.

Perhaps the most valuable skill Tracy brings to the group is his ability on the fiddle, enabling the Ramblers to explore for the first time the largely untapped twin fiddle tradition of many of the early string bands. LIZA JANE is even more of a departure for the group than the '40s songs: a driving and haunting fiddle duet in octaves, propelled along by one of the few survivals in this country of Celtic "chin-music," or "diddling the chorus," excellently hollered out here by Cohen.

In performance as well as personality, Tracy is not the original that Paley is; Tracy's musical style and his sense of humor are deeply rooted in his experience with country music, and, like his models, he enjoys cutting a dance step or occasionally playing the galoot on stage. That Mike and John have learned to relax with Tracy's broadness seems apparent on the record; there is some delightful goofing behind the guitar piece, BUCK DANCER'S CHOICE. It is something of a disappointment that none of Tracy's banjo playing appears on the album, but perhaps he is not ready yet. The steadily improving banjo expertise of Cohen, especially on the Uncle Dave Macon song, GREY CAT ON THE TENNESSEE FARM (the stanzas of which might be called Tennessee haiku), indicates that Paley will not be tragically missed on this score.

The Ramblers seem to be saying in their program notes that they have moved forward with the addition of Tracy Schwarz, and there is a good deal on the record that bears them out: early Bluegrass songs are now tackled (including the difficult harmony singing), complete performances (HELLO, JOHN D.) have been fabricated out of fragments, new fiddle traditions have been met and mastered; even the most archaic and lyric of American songs, such as the lovely and elusive LITTLE CARPENTER, are grist for the Rambler mill. In the group's insistence on progress, there is implied an

admission of change, and this is so. Human (and musical) chemistry is subtle; the only audible difference between Gid Tanner's old groups, the Georgia Boys and the Skillet Lickers, is the absence of Riley Puckett from the first. Yet, the difference is there, and no one would mistake one group for the other. So it is with the Ramblers: a different group with the same aims; the same songs with a new sound; a reawakened absorption with technique, coupled with a new approach to humor; a new combination of voices and instruments. Like the bourbon drinker changing over to Scotch, the listener who has been with the Ramblers since their formation in 1958 will need to acquire a new taste. But the intoxication is still there.

Another recent issue of special interest to Rambler fans is an odd little four-song 7" LP entitled EARTH IS EARTH. Brandishing the most bizarre cover photo in the entire Asch catalog (with liner notes by Lewis Carroll?), this little under-the-counter item features the id-oriented antics of a gang of behind-the-barn music makers called the New Lost City Bang Boys. The resemblance of the group to the Ramblers in all respects save instinctual restraint is nothing short of incredible. Wilbur Seeger, Delmore Paley, and McKinley Cohen (the insincere ring of these names alone raises serious doubts as to the honest intentions of the three) stride uninhibitedly and single-mindedly through four explicitly naughty country songs such as Tom Ashley's MY SWEET FARM GIRL ("She loves her daddy because I'm long and hard) in a manner salacious enough to curl Aunt Minnie's wig and send Grandpa off on a midnight visit to the widder's. Apparently fearing repercussions from prudes and censors, the Bangs disappeared shortly after recording this disc, and numerous requests for their presence at nudist and free love conventions have gone unanswered. The memory linger on, however, and connoisseurs of good-natured back-room fun will have a "bang-up" time with this record.

Rambler fans will have to have TOM PALEY, MIKE SEEGER, AND JOHN COHEN SING SONGS OF THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS for one song, WHO'S THAT KNOCKING ON MY WINDOW? The rest of the album contains nothing that isn't available on NLCR Folkways albums, although the versions here are sometimes different takes. The one new song, from the Carter Family, is a beautiful duet by Mike and Tom, and well worth owning.

The title of the LP was a humorous suggestion by Bob Dylan.  
(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

BROWNIE MCGHEE AND SONNY TERRY AT THE SECOND FRET  
(Prestige Bluesville 1058)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

Bluesville has finally let Brownie and Sonny rest a bit from their Struggle for Significance, and, for the first time on records, has caught them in the relaxed and casual atmosphere in which they perform best. This is a live recording from a Philadelphia coffee house, with a quiet, appreciative audience for which Brownie and Sonny seem to cast off their veneer of self-consciousness much more readily than in a recording studio. Sonny takes most of the vocals this time, getting closer and closer to his old Southern style. Brownie, despite his genteel introductions, gets the spirit as well, leaving his rut for some amazing runs and developing some very well-sustained long solos. Sonny's harp has never been more inventive.

This record comes very close to representing the terrific music these two can make in informal surroundings. For those whose acquaintance with Terry and McGhee is limited to their earlier Bluesvilles, this disc should be quite a revelation. By far the best Brownie and Sonny LP.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

THE IMAGE, MAN ...

JUDY HENSKE (Elektra 231)

Album Rating: \*½

JUDY HENSKE: HIGH FLYING BIRD (Elektra 241)

Album Rating: \*

Personality has always been at the core of public entertainment. The humdrum mass of humanity has always gaped with awe and delight at the gifted, volatile individual -- and always will. But the genuine thrill of experiencing a glittering, exciting, and extroverted personality has been cheapened and distorted by the mass modern communications media with its gimmicks and tricks, replaced by the illu-

sionary confrontation of The Image. A regimented and bored modern public, hungry for entertainment and vicarious excitement, has been gorged with writers who can't write, singers who can't sing, and actors who can't act, all of whom have been given the superficial sheen of greatness (or at least uniqueness) by the artificial construction of The Image.

The sense of The Image is strong in the performances of Judy Henske. Although her talent is strictly beer joint amateur night calibre and her musical sensibilities are crude and imitative of other artificial sources, her appearances seem to be electric, and she works hard to make them so. Big and sexy, she groans and grunts, wriggles and writhes, hollers and shouts, energetically whipping up a semblance of excitement from sheer nothingness. She offers a reputation as a "bitchin'" singer who drinks and swears like a man. She wears provocative clothing and sings "low-down" and "raunchy." She goes around slugging squares with her beads. Pretty rich stuff these days.

One feels that the mass of high school boys who daydream behind their geographies of riding the rods and battling filthy segregationists and nasty old warmongering industrialists with two-fisted Bobby Dylan have their female counterparts in Judy Henske fans. Just imagine! Me, little fourteen-year-old Susie Schultz, with my falsies and pimples, belting out folk songs like that, having Shel Silverstein writing racy Elektra liner notes about me, holding court in my night club dressing room in my undies, etc. Gee!

Henske's first solo recording (she was once a Whiskeyhill Singer), although extremely vulgar in its night club patter and feeble essays at raciness, brings The Image in strong and clear; at times, as on HOOKA TOOKA, the singing seems almost moving and Judy's antics are expressive. The spell falls in the studio tempest-in-a-teapot atmosphere of the second disc, and Henske wallows in her own bizarre sort of musical jelly. In the final analysis, one suspects that Judy Henske's absurd association with "folk music" has a simple and coldly logical explanation: folkum is the least demanding and least disciplined branch of pop music, and pop music is the last frontier of show business, the last place an untalented but energetic, aggressive, and lucky young

person can make a fortune and an international reputation overnight. Judy Henske is well on her way.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

LEROY CARR: BLUES BEFORE SUNRISE (Columbia 1799)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*\*

SCRAPPER BLACKWELL: MR. SCRAPPER'S BLUES

(Prestige Bluesville 1047)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

Leroy Carr, who is historically the most important blues singer who ever lived, is the subject of an invaluable re-issue produced for Columbia by Frank (Robert Johnson) Driggs. Carr, who was the most popular blues man in the country from the late 1920s until his death in 1935, almost singlehandedly founded the "city blues" on records. He was the first Northern singer to capture the rough honesty and high folk poetry of traditional blues without a veneer of jazzy sophistication. Simultaneously, he was the first major singer to use a combined piano-guitar sound for traditional blues. Every blues singer since Carr (except for a few isolated phenomena like Robert Johnson) has felt the influence of his regularized, yet sensitive, phrasing and the rolling beat of his piano and Scrapper Blackwell's guitar. This influence runs through Jack Dupree and Roosevelt Sykes right down to the present in city blues (Ray Charles paired two Carr compositions on one of his first discs). Carr's legacy similarly runs through Big Bill Broonzy to the first Sonny Boy Williamson and all the "down home" singers that followed him.

Leroy Carr's singing and playing, alone among the Northern blues of his time, still rings true today. His music was derived from basic jazz, but it was thoroughly purged of the jazz and ragtime sophistications heard in other Northern musicians. Free of these archaisms, and free also of the jaded hipsterism which plagued many of his successors, he sings in the unaffected way of a true folk artist, and, at the same time, communicates in his phrasing and piano playing something of the vitality of basic jazz.

Constantly weaving in and out of the vocal and piano lines is the biting single-string guitar work of Scrapper Blackwell. Blackwell pours out intriguing, well-blended

figures with an arresting acrid guitar tone no other player has ever duplicated on records. Josh White (no lie) plays a solid, unobtrusive second guitar on three tracks.

It is unfortunate that Carr's two most famous songs, *HOW LONG* and *IN THE EVENING*, are left out of this album, but I wouldn't want to give up any of the 16 that are included. Another minor reservation pertains to the lack of discographical data on this reissue. Otherwise, however, the production is superb; this album is a real cornerstone in the American blues record catalog.

Prestige Bluesville has a fine footnote to Leroy's album, presenting his "silent partner," Scrapper Blackwell, in a beautiful program of vocal blues and guitar solos recorded in 1961. Scrapper (who was murdered in an Indianapolis alley in October, 1962) here does three of the team's old numbers (including *SUNRISE* and *SHADY LANE*, both sung by Carr on the Columbia set), and several more from his own repertoire. He sings the old lyrics with feeling, and adds expert chording to his single-stringing, which is heard to great advantage on this high fidelity disc. Guitarists will especially savor his two instrumental blues, which are not dance tunes, but concert pieces, each one running through the various figurations Scrapper used in a given key. Although some of the tracks on this set are a bit long and repetitious, Scrapper's voice and guitar are appealing throughout. Excellent notes, as with the Columbia.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

IT GETS US THERE, TOO, FOLKS ...

JUDY COLLINS #3 (Elektra 243)

Album Rating: \*½

For her third major album, Judy Collins has abandoned her futile grappings with the intricacies of traditional music and recorded a complete (with one exception) collection of songs composed within the city folk music revival of the last 20 years or so (from Guthrie to Dylan). Like a party-goer perfecting his stunt of balancing a cocktail glass on his nose, she has continued to progress her skills in a pointless direction and is now one of the smoothest of the

female folkniks; Elektra is peddling the record with what must be the soft-sell of the year: "There are two superb girl folksingers. Judy Collins is one of them." (*SING OUT!*, December-January, 1963-64, Elektra ad.) Who's the other one, Texas Gladden? Collins' leaps of register are still somewhat disturbing, however, whether gimmicked up with echo chamber a la Caterina Valente or just plain awkward, as in the last stanza of *BELLS OF RHYMEY*.



Collins

Our chief reaction on hearing the record was to appreciate how good Seeger's *BELLS OF RHYMEY* and Guthrie's *DEPORTEE* songs sound in comparison to the junk of Shel Silverstein, Bob Gibson, Fred Hellerman, etc. These fine songs will still be moving experiences when *MASTERS OF WAR* (Dylan) and the sick-joke *COME AWAY, MELINDA* (Hellerman) will sound as dated and hollow as the Rippling Rhythm of Shep Fields.

An amusing sidelight contained in the liner notes (in addition to Judy's unfortunate choice of simile in gushing: "...when Bob Dylan first sang me *MASTERS OF WAR*...I felt a chill as he sang that was colder than the aluminum sink I was sitting on...". It gets us there, too, folks!) is the equal billing given the poet of Ecclesiastes and Pete Seeger in the composer credit for *TURN! TURN! TURN!* (Ecclesiastes-Seeger, Melody Trails, Inc., BMI). Come now, Pete! Are you splitting that penny a record evenly?

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

BLIND WILLIE McTELL, MEMPHIS SLIM, MEMPHIS WILLIE B., TAMPA RED, VICTORIA SPIVEY, LONNIE JOHNSON, FINE ANDERSON: *BANDY BLUES* (Prestige Bluesville 1055)

Album Rating: \*½

Composed of leftover tracks from other sessions, the main problem with this set is that it doesn't quite distinguish the real bawdy blues from those which are simply sexual. Only Memphis Slim really rises to the occasion. John

Greenway's highfalutin' notes are a gas, but they don't quite manage to tie this misguided miscellany together.  
(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

A LOT OF JACK ...

RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT (Prestige International 13033)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

JACK ELLIOTT COUNTRY STYLE (Prestige International 13045)

Album Rating: \*\*\*

JACK ELLIOTT AT THE SECOND FRET

(Prestige International 13065)

Album Rating: \*\*½

JACK ELLIOTT: RAMBLIN' COWBOY (Monitor 379)

Album Rating: \*\*½

RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT SINGS WOODY GUTHRIE AND JIMMIE RODGERS (Monitor 380)

Album Rating: \*\*½

In his early days, Jack Elliott started out to be Woody Guthrie and everything in his early recordings reflected his onetime goal. Now, he seems to be nearing the end of a gradual transition which has taken him from the relatively serious Guthrie vein into the lighthearted good-timeyness of country music and Jesse Fuller. It seems to be a transition slightly for the worse (largely because Elliott has lately lapsed so deeply into parody that, at times, one wonders if he can still sing a song "straight"). Yet, perhaps these are just the rough seas Jack needs to eventually become his own man.

The city-bred cowpoke certainly has no trouble on RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT, an album that greatly resembles Jack's classic Topic recording, JACK TAKES THE FLOOR. The LP contains no Guthrie songs; Jack scatters his talent like buckshot to include a bit of everything. There is a British music hall song, I BELONG TO GLASGOW; some old hillbilly numbers, LAST LETTER and TRAMP ON THE STREET; Jesse Fuller's great SAN FRANCISCO BAY BLUES; a miserable Kingston Trio pop song, SOUTH COAST, that not even Jack can salvage; versions of CANDY MAN and RAILROAD BILL; a Jimmie Rodgers-inspired SADIE BROWN; EAST VIRGINIA BLUES with two of the Greenbriar Boys; a Texas-style medley of Ray Charles tunes,

I GOT A WOMAN and I LOVE HER SO; Clarence Ashley's THE CUCKOO; etc. Jack's performances sparkle with originality and wit, and his showmanship still maintains the needed respect necessary for his folk material. All in all, RAMBLIN' JACK ELLIOTT is Jack's finest American recording.

Elliott's COUNTRY STYLE LP finds him loping in the grassy fields of country music (not the old-timey tunes of the New Lost City Ramblers nor the pre-Bluegrass and birth of Bluegrass numbers of the Greenbriar Boys, but the dyed-in-wool country-western songs of such artists as Ernest Tubb, Hank Williams, Roy Acuff, etc.). This is a daring step for Jack to take, since folkniks have never displayed much more than contempt for this type of music, but, should he be able to pull it off, it may be a most important one. Much of the music that Jack sings here is certainly more valid than the folkum dribblings of all those trios; it will be to his great credit if he can educate the urban folk movement to this basic fact.

Never a performer noted for his artistic consistency (like some Shakespearean actors, he is brilliant only in flashes), Elliott sounds tired, uninterested, and affected on his in-person album, JACK ELLIOTT AT THE SECOND FRET. His mannerisms seem forced and often show signs of freezing into mere grotesque vocal tricks (as in HOW LONG BLUES and ROCK ISLAND LINE, two rather pathetic burlesques), and his long introductions wander pointlessly in bewildered circles. The element of self-parody is strongly present. It is unfortunate that Prestige recorded him in such a mood; the results are a rather tawdry and overdone album.

Elliott's two Monitor LPs, both reissues from Britain, have been dealt with in previous LSRs (when they originally appeared on English Columbia). Neither album is very good, although the GUTHRIE-RODGERS one does contain a fine version of Woody's I AIN'T GOT NO HOME. Jack is generally as broad as a barn door, however. Monitor should have reissued his excellent Topic discs instead.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

WORTH QUOTING

Jack Elliott: "If you want to see real guitar tuning, go to a concert by the NLGR. Sometimes I just go to those concerts to watch them tune..."

JACKIE WASHINGTON (Vanguard 9110)

Album Rating: \*½

This album sounds like some sort of abortive attempt to establish the talentless Washington as "The Velvet Fog" (remember Mel Torme?) of folk music. But a lot of breathy wheezing and a mere whisper of a voice don't make for "lyricism," as some would have us believe. Washington is a sorry amateur in every sense of the word, and it was rather like robbing the cradle to record a whole album of his vague and hazy bumbblings. DIRTY OLD TOWN, WILSON RAG, and LITTLE BROWN DOG are among the casualties, all of them, we're afraid, fatally wounded.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

PROMISING NEWCOMER ...

TOM RUSH: GOT A MIND TO RAMBLE (Prestige Folklore 14003)

Album Rating: \*\*\*

TOM RUSH AT THE UNICORN (Ly Cornu 70)

Album Rating: \*\*

Tom Rush, a Harvard-based citybilly, makes a pleasing record debut on two new discs. The Prestige album, GOT A MIND TO RAMBLE, is the better, containing some really fine material with a modicum of folknik dross. Rush, who seems to have learned from Cisco Houston, Jack Elliott, Eric Von Schmidt, and Merle Travis (he also lists Robert Johnson, but there is no trace of that fine blues singer here), sings in an extremely natural and likeable light country style very reminiscent of Elliott, but without the latter's distracting mannerisms. His SAN FRANCISCO BAY BLUES is a real tour de force, as is the instrumental MOLE'S MOAN (a lovely guitar piece) and the moving JUST A CLOSER WALK WITH THEE. Rush is at his inventive best in the knife-guitar cowboy version of RYE WHISKEY, and sings NINE POUND HAMMER with all the country sound of a Merle Travis. Unfortunately, Prestige lists him as a "white blues interpreter," and, on these songs, young Rush is in over his head, tending (like all but the very best urban blues singers) to get rather loud and heavy-handed. Still, GOT A MIND TO RAMBLE is a very impressive

record.

TOM RUSH AT THE UNICORN is less successful, largely because of a preponderance of blues and a long (5½ minutes), dull version of OLD BLUE. It's still worth a listen, however, and Rush is a performer to watch.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

BLUEGRASS AND NEAR-BLUEGRASS ON CITY LABELS ...

THE DILLARDS: BACK PORCH BLUEGRASS (Elektra 232)

Album Rating: \*½

MARSHALL BRICKMAN, ERIC WEISSBERG, AND COMPANY: NEW DIMENSIONS IN BANJO AND BLUEGRASS (Elektra 238)

Album Rating: \*\*

ROGER SPRUNG: PROGRESSIVE BLUEGRASS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTALS (Folkways 2370)

Album Rating: \*\*\*

THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN ON THE ROAD (Folkways 2411)

Album Rating: \*\*

The buckskin-clad Dillards come on a bit homespun for a group so obviously sophisticated and musically eclectic. Their BACK PORCH BLUEGRASS contains recognizable elements from pop music, country-western, and (surprisingly, for the boys boast a rural Missouri background) the city revival from Clarence Ashley's group to Travis Edmonson, although the sentimental composition OLD HOME PLACE indicates the group's feeling for contemporary country tradition. The Dillards' interest focuses on their instrumentals, and the original tunes DUELIN' BANJO and DOUG'S TUNE thoroughly outclass the largely uninspired vocals. Doug Dillard's banjo picking is as tuneful and inventive as that produced by such consciously studious city players as Tom Fales, and seems to avoid the pitfalls of the abstract professional Bluegrass school of Don Reno. A promising debut, but we believe that the group's best recordings are yet to be made.

Interesting in brief snatches, but a tiresome experience for all save those few fans who sleep with their finger-picks on, Marshall Brickman and Eric Weissberg's Nashville-cum-Julliard banjo instrumentals on NEW DIMENSIONS IN BANJO AND BLUEGRASS are rank with the sweaty odor of glassy-eyed musical theory and whatever the city banjo picker's equiv-

alent of the scholarly closet is. Specialists who will regard EARL'S BREAKDOWN played simultaneously on two banjos as the height of musical ecstasy will not miss the singing which is an essential element of authentic Bluegrass; everyone else will -- unbearably so. Clarence White's featured guitar deserves mention for occasionally livening things up from the incessant rat-a-tat. Now get back in your cases, boys.

Standing in complete contrast to the above recording is Roger Sprung's PROGRESSIVE BLUEGRASS AND OTHER INSTRUMENTALS. The record's "Bluegrass" monicker is a misnomer, incorrectly and inadequately describing Sprung's jazzy banjo romp with sidemen (including a corny ricky-tick drummer) through a diverse program that is by turns hilarious and electric. Included are popular songs often treated by country-oriented musicians, THE WORLD IS WAITING FOR THE SUNRISE and BYE BYE BLUES, as well as old-time minstrel show songs, straight jazz (BIG BANJO FROM BROADWAY is a re-casting for banjo of BIG NOISE FROM WINNETKA), and delights likely to be the album's most played and discussed pieces, MACK THE KNIFE, THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER (certainly the wittiest recording of this old war horse), and a wildly swinging GREENSLEEVES. Handling lead guitar for the group and matching Sprung solo for solo in an astonishing display of musicianship is the amazing Doc Watson, showing a tremendous feeling for jazz improvisation. Sprung possesses the humor and ingenuity that separate the truly creative musician from the feverish technician, and his record, while it will never find its way into the analyses of folklorists, will be enjoyed and probably imitated for years to come.

THE COUNTRY GENTLEMEN ON THE ROAD finds the group in a set of concert dates at Antioch and at a Columbus coffee house, and displaying a not very entertaining stage presence between songs. They have not especially profited from this "live" recording, and sound tired in comparison with their highly energetic studio work. The collegians dutifully applaud the instrumental breaks, and the Gents reward them with Clarence Henry's duck- and frog-voice pop song, and repeat three songs previously recorded for Folkways. The coffee house side comes to life during the solid country stylings of the Stanley Brothers' LITTLE

GLASS OF WINE and Bill Monroe's RAWHIDE, then suffers a complete relapse on the unfunny "satire arrangement" in phony Cockney dialect of BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN BLUES. This album is well below the standard set by the Gentlemen on their earlier records.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

CHAMPION JACK DUPREE: CABBAGE GREENS (Okeh 12103)

Album Rating: \*\*½

Champion Jack Dupree is one singer to whom text seems more important than tune. These recordings, made in 1940-41 when he was a successful entertainer in Indianapolis, show him using original lyrics covering a very wide range of meaningful experience, but singing and playing them in a manner which is, at best, an imitation of Indianapolis' Leroy Carr. Carr had a tendency to sing ahead of the beat, an interesting "modern" touch for him; Dupree makes a fetish of this; every line of his slow blues is phrased identically ahead of the beat. His expression is sincere, but unvarying and rather colorless.

Unrewarding as they are, these recordings proved quite important in establishing the "city blues" style which was to prevail well into the 1950s; hundreds of peculiarly expressionless vocals crowded the rhythm-and-blues lists as singers with much less to say than Dupree were influenced by his musical style. Meanwhile, Dupree himself matured tremendously; his recent recordings for Atlantic show him singing songs very similar to those on this disc, but in a much freer and more expressive manner, communicating the textual meaning much more efficiently.

Weak as they may be, these recordings are of major historical importance both to Dupree's style and that of "city blues" in general, and Frank Briggs has done a magnificent production job on this documentary.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

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John Hammond

Photograph by David Gahr

JOHN HAMMOND (Vanguard 9132)

Album Rating: \*\*\*

Here is a most striking debut album for John Hammond, son of the noted jazz collector and impresario, and a most impressive figure in the New Wave of white blues singers. Like many of these singers, he has devoted a lot of study to classic blues. The blues on this set are all derived from fairly well-known blues recordings by Robert Johnson, Leroy Carr, Son House, Furry Lewis, etc. As a rule, Hammond sings the lyrics verbatim (something of a rarity in a blues performer), and, like most urban blues singers, has considerably more trouble vocally than instrumentally.

Hammond is a virtuoso performer. Technically, he can play rings around a good many of the blues men whose songs he sings. He uses standard tuning, reproducing figures associated with open tunings with considerable fidelity as variations to his normal hard-driving claw hammer style. On several numbers, he also plays mouth harp, with fine melodic control. His voice, often brilliant and versatile, shifts almost too easily from a growl to a half-choked sob. He brings all of these virtuoso techniques into his blues performances, but sometimes uses his resources too extravagantly to put across the emotion of the songs. No holds are barred: along with the vocal ornaments of country blues, he frequently uses the folknik's gasps and wheezes. There are many abrupt changes of dynamics, tempo, guitar figuration, and voice quality. All this makes Hammond quite exciting to listen to, but it also takes him a long way from the aesthetic of the country blues, with its steadier, more artistic, and less showy emotional approach. Many who are seriously interested in country blues will find Hammond's unsubtleties uncongenial and, at times, downright theatrical.

This album is clearly the record of a singer in transition; Hammond has improved a great deal since it was made. Yet, despite its uneven moments, JOHN HAMMOND proves, beyond the shadow of a doubt (in songs like MAYHELLINE and MEAN OLD FRISCO), that young Hammond is on his way from being merely a good blues singer to becoming a really





Ralph Rinzler and John Herald

Photograph by John Cohen

brilliant one. His next record ought to be something to hear. The future of the urban blues renaissance seems to be in good hands, and, despite some shaky moments, John Hammond seems destined to become a giant, along with Dave Ray and John Koerner. Anyone interested in blues should be aware of this record.

(Reviewer: Bob Dahle)

"JOHN HERALD IS A POET" ...

THE GREENBRIAR BOYS (Vanguard 9104)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

DIAN AND THE GREENBRIAR BOYS (Elektra 233)

Album Rating: \*\*\*½

The vocal and instrumental genius of the Greenbriar Boys has found two superb showcases in these albums. The first, the group's initial solo effort, clearly places them right alongside the New Lost City Ramblers at the very pinnacle of today's citybilly folk music scene. The second, with Dian James, proves the Boys to be a featured singer's best friend.

But why take our word for it? Here is Alan Lomax: "I first met the Greenbriar Boys in 1958 after a long sojourn in Europe, and I shall never forget the shock of pleasure I felt when I first heard them play. They understood mountain melody; they were technically accomplished; but beyond all this, their ensemble had the shining, dancing sound that I associated only with such mountain virtuosi as Pete Steele, Hobart Smith, and Crockett Ward. The joy peculiar to the free-spirited American backwoodsman had somehow come to town with the Greenbriar Boys... (Ralph Rinzler's) first contact with folk music was through the Library of Congress recordings and he has been loyal to the real McCoy ever since... Bob Yellin's banjo picking shines in the background and romps brilliantly in the lead... John Herald sings like a poet... When John Herald sings a slow tune like STEWBALL or RAMBLING ROUND, his inherited feeling for poetry, his early-acquired sense for pulse, and his sensitive understanding of hillbilly style come together. Then the Greenbriar Boys live up to their name and become a fresh shoot of green from the oak of tradition."

Rinzler (mandolin), Yellin (banjo), and Herald (lead vocals and guitar) are joined by country fiddler Buddy Pendleton and former Stanley Brothers bassist Jack Cook on the Vanguard effort. Songs range from a movingly lyric LITTLE BIRDIE to Red River Dave's graphic AMELIA EARHART'S LAST FLIGHT, from Gid Tanner's Skillet Lickers (OTHER SIDE OF JORDAN) through the Carter Family (GIRL ON THE GREENBRIAR SHORE) and the Monroe Brothers (NINE POUND HAMMER) to Woody Guthrie and contemporary country sacred song (WE NEED A LOT MORE OF JESUS). The performances sparkle with the life, humor, and complexity of the country idiom. As Ralph Rinzler states in his liner notes, the Greenbriar Boys have been intelligent enough to have "adapted themselves to a musical style, unlike most other urban folk music performers who adapt the material to an already familiar style."

The Greenbriars nearly tear down the studio behind "Miss Jesse James" on a group of fine country songs on the Elektra issue. Miss James, the wife of famous folknik Travis Edmonson, is both a Hollywood starlet and a Molly O'Day-styled country singer. She looks and sounds like a 97-pound swinger, and is certainly more than adequate on her songs, although Rinzler, Herald, and Yellin could probably make Jac Holzman sound like Bill Monroe himself in a session like this must have been. Drop your needle on SALLY, LET YOUR BANGS HANG DOWN, GREEN CORN, or TRAGIC ROMANCE (catch Herald's Riley Puckett guitar here) for some of the wildest, most foot-stomping numbers we've heard from a city girl folksinger for a long time. Recommended.

It might be a good idea for the Greenbriars to back Joan Baez for an entire LP: they should be able to put some life into her zombie-like performances.

(Reviewers: Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson)

### IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Reviews on records by Bill and Charlie Monroe, Dave Van Ronk, Cisco Houston, all the Jug Bands, Joan Baez, Pete Seeger, Peter La Farge, Mark Spoelstra, Alan Lomax, the Carter Family, Jean Redpath, Peggy Seeger, Eric Von Schmidt, the Weavers, and many, many others! Plus columns by John Cohen and Jay Smith, articles, humor, great photographs, and AN INTERVIEW WITH OURSELVES, by Jon Pankake and Paul Nelson! And more surprises!



Memphis Willie B., Furry Lewis, Gus Cannon

Photograph by Ann Charters

articles and columns

POETRY ROOM

# The Friends of Old-Time Music

by Richard Rinzler

Amidst the opulence of the urban boom in old-time music, it is difficult to realize how recently the whole movement was little more than a handful of records and an idea. The original Library of Congress recordings were (and still are) known to only a few, and, with the exception of John and Alan Lomax, scholarship was directed toward the Anglo-Irish tradition rather than the American.

While the tenacity and perception of the Lomaxes maintained a constant interest in American traditional music, the turning point -- the beginning of the geometric rise in popularity of old-time music -- was the issuance of Folkways' ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC (Folkways FA 2951, 2952, 2953). The release of this wealth of material in the early 1950s finally gave the public an opportunity to hear what old-time music sounded like, and a chance to appreciate it for its American country flavor.

The influence of the ANTHOLOGY, although not immediate, was profound. The trend toward old-time music had begun, but it took the success of commercial folk music throughout the '50s to pave the way for its widespread acceptance. This acceptance did not occur spontaneously, but was due in a great degree to the efforts of the New Lost City Ramblers, the University of Chicago Folk Festival, the Friends of Old-Time Music, and Moses Asch's Folkways Records.

Undoubtedly, the most unique, although probably the least-known of these influences, is the Friends of Old-Time Music. This body was founded in December, 1960, by Margot Mayo, Jean Ritchie, John Cohen, Ralph Rinzler, and Israel G. Young; and later chartered as a non-profit organization under the name, the Society for Traditional Music, Inc. Its purpose was to reach deep into the grass roots and bring traditional folk music, performed by traditional

artists, to the New York City area. At a time when no commercial producers were interested, the Friends decided to show people the "real article" in the right way: in a series of concerts that would satisfy both the capacity of the performer and the appetite of the audience.

In February, 1961, the Friends of Old-Time Music held their first concert, presenting Roscoe Holcomb for the first time in New York. This was followed in the spring by another concert which introduced Clarence Ashley and Doc Watson to Northern audiences. Six subsequent concerts over the next two years presented the Stanley Brothers, Jesse Fuller, Bill Monroe and the Blue Grass Boys, Gus Cannon, Memphis Willie B., Furry Lewis, Almeda Riddle, Hobart Smith, Mississippi John Hurt, and Dock Boggs.

For many of these performers, the Friends of Old-Time Music concerts were their first public performances in New York, and, for some, their first in the North. This established new means to widen the perspective of urban audiences and enlarge the opportunities for old-time musicians and singers. The Society's early activity in the field of traditional music attracted much publicity, and, with the help of clubs and organizations in other cities, the Friends of Old-Time Music were usually able to arrange short tours for their performers. In this manner, the Friends spurred the entire old-time music movement and greatly enhanced its popularity.

This fall, with the help of the Friends of Old-Time Music, Simon and Schuster published the YOUNG FOLK SONG BOOK, a book of the favorite songs of several popular performers. Through the generosity of the contributing artists, the Society will receive the royalties from this book, and thus be able to greatly expand its activities in all fields of traditional music.

Chief among these activities is the Friends of Old-Time Music's role as a co-ordinating body and general clearing house. In its unique position, the Society will offer its services, free of charge, to any organization planning concerts, club dates, or festivals. By co-ordinating the schedules of traditional performers, costs can be cut to a minimum, while convenience to promoters and artists can be greatly improved.

Another exciting part of the new program is collecting

trips. Several tape recorders will be purchased, and any interested and qualified individual will be able to borrow these for collecting trips into undocumented areas of American folk music. Serious collectors will eventually be supplied with both funds and equipment.

Concerts, of course, will continue with increasing frequency. In the near future, the Society is planning appearances by such artists as Maybelle Carter, the McGhee Brothers, Bessie Jones, Elizabeth Cotten, Fred McDowell, and the Morris Brothers. Concerts of New York City and New England folklore are also being organized, and several newly-discovered artists will soon be introduced.

Despite the Friends of Old-Time Music's new financial stability, the success of its new program depends entirely on public participation. A co-ordinating agency needs people to co-ordinate, and a concert can't be held without an audience. For its own satisfaction, and for the public's pleasure, the Society invites inquiries, requests, and comments on any phase of its activities.

Address all correspondence to: The Friends of Old-Time Music, Folklore Center, 110 MacDougal Street, NYC.

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## Editors' Column

Well, folks, we've changed horses in mid-stream and lassoed some professional printers, fancy pictures, and big-name columnists, but don't let it bother you. The contents and policy are just the same as they were in that tacky little magazine with the big gloobs of ink all over it. (Or maybe that's what is bothering you.) We now have three reviewing editors, and we've spaced them out real evenly: Barry Hansen in Los Angeles, Jon Pankake in good old Minneapolis, and Paul Nelson in New York City. (So, WHEREVER YOU GO, THERE'S AN EDITOR NEAR YOU!) We also have added Dave Gahr, the best in the business in the world of photography. Wedgely Todd has signed on as chief flunky. We've got so many new people that we all have to hold up signs in the office to tell who we are! ... The English have published a massive collection of Woody Guthrie's great songs under the title, THE ALMOST COMPLETE SONGS OF WOODY GUTHRIE. And why no American counterpart? That's what we'd like to know. ... The British also have a new Leadbelly LP taken from RCA-Victor pressings. Naturally, it's not available in this country. Everyone knows that THIS MORNING is now available as a Collier paperback at the bargain price of 95 cents. It is thoroughly knowledgeable and painstakingly researched, but neither poetic nor sympathetic in the manner of the best American commentators. Recommended. ... Mike Seeger announces that his recording of Dock Boggs is progressing well, and that Dock's first sessions since the 1920s will soon be available. ... B. A. Botkin, in a recent issue of THE NEW YORK FOLKLORE QUARTERLY, characterizes LSR as "an informative and well-informed critical journal which may become THE AMERICAN RECORD GUIDE of the folk song field." Bless you, sir, bless you. ... A reprint of the Woody Guthrie tribute first published in MAINSTREAM can be obtained in booklet form for 50 cents from the Guthrie Children's Trust Fund, Suite 1304, 200 W. 57th Street, New York 19, New York. It features articles

by Pete Seeger, Josh Dunson, and others. ... The Center Arts Council of Minneapolis' Walker Art Center is sponsoring a series of three folk music concerts to be held in the Tyrone Guthrie Theatre. The talent booked is a compendium of the best of the authentic and revivalist musicians presented in folk festivals throughout the country during the past two years, and is the best single line-up of a series or festival yet. Schedule: January 25, the New Lost City Ramblers, Dock Boggs, and Roscoe Holcomb; February 8, Bessie Jones and the Georgia Sea Island Singers, Sleepy John Estes, and Mississippi John Hurt; February 22, Jean Ritchie, Doc Watson, Clint Howard, and Fred Price. Tickets for the series and/or individual concerts are now on sale. ... Dave Glover, of BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS fame, has been gigging with Rolf Cahn in the Bay area of California, giving West-erners a taste of the finest blues harmonica to come out of the city folk revival. He reports that the Cabale, 2504 San Pablo near Dwight, in Berkeley is the place to go on the West Coast for blues. Some of their recent bookings have been people like Jesse Fuller, Bukka White, and Mance Lipscomb. ... Takoma Records, a West Coast outfit, is supposed to have a Bukka White LP all ready for release. ... For years, there was no SAN FRANCISCO BAY BLUES available by Jesse Fuller, the man who wrote it. Now, in the space of about three weeks, three different albums by Jesse for three different companies have hit the market. You can now hear the "One-Man Band" sing and play his famous theme song on Prestige, Folk-Lyric, and Good Time Jazz. ... The big question in folk music circles these days: who wrote BLOWN' IN THE WIND, Bob Dylan or some high school student in New Jersey? NEWSWEEK started the whole thing as a rumor in an article about Bob which appeared just after his Carnegie Hall concert. Dylan has neither confirmed nor denied the charges. Since the article appeared, several people have jumped off the Dylan band wagon, screaming "phony, phony!" SING OUT! printed a feeble and flippant defense which didn't even attempt to find out the facts, and other critics have just looked the other way while turning out indignant gush that amounted to little more than hero-worship. We don't know the facts. We wish we did so that we could print them. But, regardless of whether Dylan wrote BLOWN' IN THE WIND or not, this seems

like a poor time to cross him off the list as nothing but a fake. If he has been dishonest, he should be criticized for it; responsible folk music commentators should not close their eyes and mumble "a new Yevtushenko" or "he's the spokesman for his generation." (All of us are roughly the same age as Dylan and he is certainly not our spokesman!) But, at the same time (and despite his unfortunate one-way trip up Topical Song Alley, where he has become a tedious and unoriginal preacher instead of an artist), he has done good work, and will do good work again. (Surely, no one is suggesting that he didn't write any of his songs!) A person of Dylan's stature (despite all the f overblown image-building, fake Guthrie biography, artistic calamities like MASTERS OF WAR and WE DAVEY MOORE?) is bound to grow tired of the work of achievement possible in the BROADSIDE genre. There are indications that this may be happening (YOUR WEARY TUNE is an example); let us hope so. I think that, beneath all that press agent slop, the real Bob Dylan is a true and talented artist, not wise, perhaps, but genuine. That is our shaky and tentative testimonial; we must be counted in Bob's corner. ... LSR is now on a strict bimonthly schedule and will be printed in the first week of January, March, May, July, September, and November. It would help a great deal if readers would tell their favorite book and record stores about us. ... Phil Ochs, the Ian Campbell Folk Group, and the Irish Ramblers have LPs due on Elektra. That label will also have a 2-LP anthology of the best of the urban white blues singers (including Koerner, Ray, and Glover). ... See you in March, folks.

--JON PANKAKE, PAUL NELSON, MARRY HANSEN

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sive answer to this question. I can only report on: (1) some activities which have been witnessed; (2) some projects which have been started; and (3) some personal ideas which need investigation.

(It should be noted that, at this moment, there is no way to keep abreast of all that is happening in the area of folk music. Even within the record industry, or more specifically, country music and Bluegrass, it has become necessary for one to visit at least three different record stores to get any sort of picture of what is being produced.)

1) Besides the outstanding folk festivals which are dedicated to the idea of presenting traditional music (University of Chicago, U.C.L.A., Newport, etc.), there are less well-known areas of activity: Gerde's Folk City in New York has often offered a voice for otherwise unheard musicians. This past fall, they have ranged from Tom Ashley to the Country Boys to Red Allen. The Club 47 in Cambridge, Mass., has presented the Osborne Brothers and Dock Boggs, and has a continued policy of presenting traditional music by both city and country performers. The Second Fret in Philadelphia has found it financially expedient to employ "ethnic acts." The Cabale in Berkeley, Calif., focuses on traditional blues singers; Bukka White often plays there. The Ash Grove in Los Angeles is probably the oldest and strongest of places that have presented this music; their calendar over the years reads like a WHO'S WHO IN TRADITIONAL MUSIC. The Friends of Old-Time Music (see elsewhere in this issue) in New York exist only to present traditional musicians. The Walker Art Center in Minneapolis is running a series of concerts which will be a good survey of American traditional music. Besides lecture series at various universities, many of the folk music clubs at the colleges are giving a voice to traditional performers. MacDougal Street in Greenwich Village continues as the Tangiers of the folk music world -- where one can find a little bit of everything, and the best and worst together. Finally, there is the annual fiddle-banjo contest in Topanga Canyon, Los Angeles, which has grown each year, and has really sharpened the development of city performers in the line of old-time and Bluegrass music.

2) Apart from the folklore research done in a few large universities, there are record collectors and others who

have been interviewing and recording traditional artists, and who have been providing fuel for the fires which have been lighted in places such as those previously described. Ralph Rinzler, Mike Seeger, Art Rosenbaum, and some others around New York have been exploring and recording traditional artists. In the Midwest, Archie Green and some of his students at the University of Illinois (as well as some of those connected with the University of Chicago Folk Festival) have been doing original research; Harry Oster is now teaching in Iowa City; Ellen Stekert is at Wayne in Detroit. Indiana has Frank Hoffman, and some of the students have been helping run Bill Monroe's Country Music Ranch at Bean Blossom. Gus Mead in Ohio and Willard Johnson in Minneapolis have done incredible research, using old phonograph records and tape recordings as their tools. Perhaps the strongest center of activity is forming in Los Angeles where Eugene Earle lives, developing his record collection, and where the John Edwards collection of American country music is stored (it was compiled in Australia). Ed Kahn is also there, writing a thesis on the Carter Family; Bess Hawes teaches classes all over the area; and D. K. Wilgus is devoting his energy through U.C.L.A.

Each of the aforementioned people have individual projects which they are pursuing. Some are involved in areas that overlap, and there is much cooperation between all of them. Together, they are working to fill out the general picture of folk music in an intelligent way. Each project will find a form of expression, be it a phonograph record, notes for same, publication of a paper, or the compilation of a list of record numericals. These are the current tools of folk music study.

3) In my close association with Roscoe Holcomb (there are already two records and a 30-minute film on the subject), I have become more absorbed by the kind of person he is who makes such music as well as the sources from which his music comes. Roscoe never was nor will be a professional musician. Work comes first with him, and music is in another place in his life. Yet, one of the influences on him was a man he never met. Dock Boggs made about eight records back in 1927, and those songs which he recorded are still played around the place where Roscoe lives, and in very much the same style and arrangement that Boggs

gave them years ago. Recently, Dock Boggs has been "uncovered," and we find that his desire back then was to be a professional musician, and that he seemed to be tailoring his music to make it popular with the mountain people. Now, it can't be overlooked that Boggs came from this area and sang songs which had been around, but it should be noted that he gave these songs a very specific sound. In listening to Boggs in person and to Roscoe the same way, you get to notice many differences in their attitude toward the music. For Roscoe, music seems to be a one-way proposition; he makes the music, and it leaves him; sometimes the instrument will be louder than the voice, sometimes the words will be unclear, but he is making his music, and there seems to be little concern of how it reaches the listener. Roscoe just gives it all he's got. Dock Boggs, on the other hand, has everything under control. His singing seems to have developed since the early days, and each note seems to be carefully considered (as well as each phrase he plays on the banjo). He is concerned with how the listener receives his music.

In this distinction between the two men, I feel there is not only a difference of personality, but a difference which can be understood as defining the phrase "a folk professional" as something different within the category of "folk musician." Both are part of a folk community (and, in some instances, sing the same songs). One takes the role of spokesman for the community when he acts as a "folk professional;" the other passes on the tradition in a different way, one which is even closer to the heart of folk music. Both have been indispensable as perpetrators of the tradition.

Admittedly, this is a minor observation, but it has become crucial to me in understanding the different themes that run through this music. Future columns will deal with similar thoughts and definitions.

WORTH QUOTING  
Jack Elliott: "Jean Redpath is a good, honest singer, not one of those girly-show types, and her hair isn't particularly long..."  
Wedgely Todd: "Better think twice, folks; it might not be all right."



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## Jay Smith's Column

LSR's loyal opposition is represented by Bob and Juanita Coulson's column in the jazz-satire-science fiction magazine, ENCLAVE. The Coulsons also edit YANDRO, a science fiction fanzine. If you don't like A. L. Lloyd's singing, send 25¢ to the Coulsons, Route 3, Wabash, Indiana 46992. ... Houghton Mifflin/Riverside Press has a new hard-cover book, COME FOR TO SING, a collection of generally well-known songs selected and illustrated by Bob Pavitt's friend, Eric Von Schmidt. The drawings are a delight. Look for familiar faces. ... DOWN BEAT's discovery, the legendary Blind Orange Adams, has mastered the 13-string guitar. This rare instrument resembles the standard 12-, but has an extra drone string running up the back of the neck. It is sounded on the off beat by the left thumb. The unique sound of the 13-string guitar is perfect for Adams' new night club act, which features his wife, Navel Orange Adams, a belly dancer, and Wedgely Todd on the hammered dulcimer (ball peen variety). ... Jack Elliott, Mike Seeger, Doc Watson, and Almeda Riddle will all have solo Vanguard albums. ... Barbie dolls and Martin guitars are hard to get these days. The jug band market, however, is bearish. ... The recent Grammy Awards show featured Peter, Paul and Mary with "the best folk recording of the year." It turned out to be THE HAMMER SONG, which isn't even a folk song. The same program had the New Christy Minstrels with what must have been the worst possible rendition of THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND. I hope so. ... Cheryl Thompson, Miss Nevada in this year's Miss America contest, used to sing with the Stanley Brothers. ... The cover of Kapp album 1343 (which bears the usual HOOTENANNY title) advertises Jo Mapes in big letters, but it's Jo March who sings on the record. ... Elektra Records will release the Woody Guthrie Library of Congress material on either two or three LP's this spring. ... DOMINIQUE sounds more than a little like THE WRECK OF THE OLD '97. ... The December COSMOPOLITAN (Greenwich Village Issue) featured an article about Iszy Young. ... Oak Publications has a NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS SONGBOOK in the works. ... Bob Dylan has taken to

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*The Folk Song Magazine*

writing liner notes lately, contributing the purple prose to the latest efforts of Joan Baez and Peter, Paul and Mary. ... Alan Ribback, former owner of the Gate of Horn in Chicago, has sold his establishment and gone South to collect Freedom Songs. ... The September issue of the British magazine, FILMS AND FILMING, had this to say about John Cohen's Kentucky film: "John Cohen's THE HIGH LONESOME SOUND traces the folk music of north Kentucky against a background of present day depression mitigated by song and religious fervour. In the Flaherty tradition, but too loosely edited and at times peppered with illogical a la Godard camera set-ups. Still, it's the best so far (of the Venice Film Festival). ... I've talked to a few people who bought THE FREEWHEELIN' BOB DYLAN on Columbia and got four different songs from those listed on the album. On these "odd" copies, GIRL FROM THE NORTH COUNTRY, MASTERS OF WAR, BOB DYLAN'S DREAM, and TALKING WORLD WAR III BLUES are omitted, while ROCKS AND GRAVEL, LET ME DIE IN MY FOOTSTEPS, GAMBLIN' WILLIE'S DEAD MAN'S HAND, and TALKING JOHN BIRCH BLUES are added. I wonder how many of these "collector's items" were issued. ... I've had in my files for many months now an ad which appeared in TIME on October 12, 1962, concerning a new Harry Belafonte album. The wording seems to imply that God himself came down to sit in with ol' Harry on this recording date. The frenzied ad man who ground out this copy ought to have put it in Biblical numbered paragraphs. Titled THUNKER (pardon), THUNDER IN THE WINGS, the ad reads as follows: "The musicians will tell their children and they, in turn, will pass it on. And it will become a legend. It happened on a hot summer's eve. While brooding storm clouds gathered outside, Harry Belafonte pressed on with the last selections for a new album...The storm broke during rehearsal of their last song, DARK AS A DUNGEON. Even in the soundproof recording studio hall, the harsh rumble of the elements could be heard in accompaniment to the bitter words of protest in the song. Before recording, they waited for dead silence...and began. As if on cue, there was a crackle of lightning followed by a tremendous thunderclap. But they continued, to repeated bursts of thunder and torrential rains. They finished, breathless from the eerily dramatic phenomenon. You will hear all of this sound in the new Belafonte album."

Exactly as it happened. And you may judge. Was it just another storm? Or was it symbolic comment...?" Surely, the feverish mind that produced such ringing nonsense should have titled it GOD AND BELAFONTE AT RCA or WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE. What chance do us poor folksingers without Heavenly connections have? ... In the Summer, 1963, issue of SING OUT!, Pete Seeger gives us "seven ways to ruin an American folk song." Reason #3 is: "change all the words in order to take all the protesty quality out of it." Perhaps it would not be irrelevant for me to add, in behalf of LSR, a Reason #8: change all the words in order to put all the Protesty quality in it. ... Advance word has it that the second Koerner, Ray, and Glover LP for Elektra (tentatively titled YEAH) will be the blues LP. Urban blues singers are reported jumping off bridges in New York City after hearing tapes of the sessions. LSR's New York Editor, Paul Nelson, says he's never heard a better citybilly blues album. The Dave Ray material is absolutely staggering, he reports, and ought to establish Ray as a veritable giant among city blues singers. The album should be out in February or March. ... Are all city folksingers and critics avid film fans, or does it just seem that way? ... The new hip book to be reading, by the way, is J. P. Donleavy's A SINGULAR MAN. Moses Asch has been seen carrying a copy down 46th Street, and Paul Nelson keeps peeking at it while he's supposed to be working on SING OUT! ... Dwight Macdonald had some acid words to say about folk music in a recent ESQUIRE column; alas, his comments hardly made sense. ... Prestige has dropped all plans for issuing its FOUR TRADITIONAL VIRGINIA SINGERS record. One of the singers was Horton Barker. ... Hot tip for the makers of black cowboy hats and Huck Finn caps: better start turning out Grand Marais belt buckles. ... GARDYLOO-type item: NH is starting a fan club for DR. ... Word has it that RCA is forming the jug band to end all jug bands, the Even Gross Jug Band. ... Pete Seeger has written of the American Indian communal system whereby lands and water were the property of the tribe, while songs were individually-owned. Pete seems to look with favor on this system -- an interesting position for a professional musician. I know a haberdasher who might agree, but he feels private ownership should include songs and clothing stores. The druggist down the street thinks

the system might well be extended to songs, clothing stores, drug stores, etc. And so it goes. ... My feelings so far on both the new HOOTENANNY folk magazines have been the usual ones of detached amusement and, at times, blind fury. To say that the first issues of each were stupid, sloppy, and generally useless (and obviously out there for the cold, hard cash) would sum it up nicely. I have some hopes for the Shelton-edited magazine (largely because rumor has it that he wasn't responsible for most of the first issue), but no hope at all for the ABC-inspired periodical. (Another magazine, FOLK WORLD, also made its appearance; it may be purchased under your nearest rock.) I was greatly amused, however (and even a little moved), to see that the ABC magazine had printed LSR's Jack Elliott-horse-sea-nude woman joke (see LSR #26), and put a bathing suit on the Bal! Damn Puritans.

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For a listing of additional items available from the Folklore Center,  
 see our advertisement on p. 70 of the Oct.-Nov., 1963 issue of  
 SING OUT! (vol 13, no. 4)

All books advertised in SING OUT! available by mail order.  
 Add twenty-five cents to each order for postage and handling.



THE FOLKLORE CENTER  
 110 MacDougal Street  
 New York 12, N.Y.



M. Seeger, T. Schwarz, J. Cohen: the "new" New Lost City Ramblers  
 Photograph by Robert Frank

additional records

POETRY HOUR

(Wherein LSR receives bouquets, dodges brickbats, and unashamedly drops names. All letters are real.)

#### PARODY OF THE MONTH ...

Dear Editors: A friend of mine, Roger DeLino, told me that you guys go for the funny stuff and parodies so I thought I'd send you this one. I call it Pete Seeger's JOHNNY APPLESAUCE, JR. from SING IN! No malice intended so here goes:

"Toshi and I have just been in \_\_\_\_\_, and the people there were just wonderful. Fine folks, and they really have some great songs. I'm going to have SING IN! print every one of them. Much as we hate to leave, we have to be in \_\_\_\_\_ by tomorrow to hear some more wonderful songs and sit in a circle on the floor around the \_\_\_\_\_, a wonderful custom these wonderful people have to celebrate their \_\_\_\_\_. I'll never forget it. As a matter of fact, I wish I could learn it to teach to all the \_\_\_\_\_ at home."

Just fill in the blanks. Sincerely,

Edward E. Riley  
St. Louis, Mo.

Editors' Note: We are always in the market for a good parody. What we would especially like are some aimed directly at us. How about it?

#### LOVES US, LOVES US NOT ...

Dear Editors: Congratulations on LSR #25, your Protest issue. It took real courage and insight to print the Truth, and it certainly needed to be said. I'll bet you got all sorts of crank letters afterward, though, from those who misunderstand what you said, which was, simply: we don't like bad songs. Keep up the good work,

Ed Slants  
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Editors: Your magazine is the most rotten I've...read!  
Bunty Davis  
Chicago, Illinois

## Current and Choice

"SPIDER" JOHN KOERNER, DAVE "SNAKER" RAY, AND TONY "LITTLE SUN" GLOVER: BLUES, RAGS, AND HOLLERS (Elektra 240)

By far the best record yet by urban white blues singers. Lomax: "...excellent blues men." Hansen: "This is a disc that will surely be a collector's item in the future, as surely as the best blues of the 1930s are collector's items now." Formerly issued on Audiophile Records.

THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS: AMERICAN MOONSHINE AND PROHIBITION (Folkways 5263)

A delightful romp through Boozeville (pruriently disguised as a "documentary") by America's finest folk group.

UNCLE DAVE MACON (REF 51)

A fine album of the man who is old-timey music in all its zany and sentimental glory. One hears in Uncle Dave the voice of a region, a philosophy, and an era in our century. Reissues of old 78s.

MIKE SEEGER: OLD-TIME COUNTRY MUSIC (Folkways 2325)

Our finest singer of old-timey music in his first solo album. Brilliant performances from a superb repertoire.

SOUTHERN JOURNEY: A COLLECTION OF FIELD RECORDINGS FROM THE SOUTH (Prestige International Documentary Series 25001 to 25012) A 12-Volume set recorded by Alan Lomax.

Twelve more volumes from Lomax's 1959-60 Southern field trip. An indispensable set by our greatest folk song collector.

OLD-TIME MUSIC AT CLARENCE ASHLEY'S, Volume Two (Folkways 2359)

Even better than Volume One: plenty of Tom's banjo and Doc's guitar, plus Dock Walsh and Carley Foster on a couple of bands.

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EXCITING,  
LIVELY, SPICY,  
REFLECTIVE,  
PHILOSOPHIC  
AND SAD!"**



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catherine and francois and everyone  
else and send in this dandy little  
blank with lots of money?

**THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW**  
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Minneapolis 40, Minnesota 55440

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two years. \$5.50 and \$8.50 if I'm a foreigner.  
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City..... State..... Zip Code.....

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EXCITING,  
LIVELY, SPICY,  
REFLECTIVE,  
PHILOSOPHIC  
AND SAD!"**



**and**

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POETRY ROOM

## ON OUR COVER

Jean Redpath adds her wit, grace, and charm to the cover of this issue of THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW, thereby giving all us rowdies a little taste and class. Miss Redpath, one of the brightest lights in the folk song revival, may be heard on Prestige International and Elektra. For an assessment of her two newest recordings, see page 5. The rest of the issue is as uncouth and ill-mannered as usual, persisting in the somewhat radical belief that a folk music magazine should actually be about folk music, not Bombs, Brotherhood, or Fidel Castro. If you don't agree, leave now. This magazine isn't for you. Cover photograph is by Photography Editor Dave Gahr.

### THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW

#### SUBSCRIPTION ADDRESS:

**BOX 1109, MPLS. 40, MINN. 55440**

Number 29

March-April, 1964

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| Photography Editor.....   | Dave Gahr                                                                |
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| Bouncer.....              | Buck Duane                                                               |
| Heroes.....               | J. P. Donleavy<br>Brigitte Bardot<br>Francois Truffaut<br>Jimmie Tarlton |

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Readers whose subscriptions expire with this issue will find a shockingly crude X slashed in the box on the right. It is the work of a madman.





# Editors' Column

Here we are again, folks, reasonably on time and still in the process of changing faces. LSR's "new look" gets newer and lookier with each issue. Drop us a line and tell us how you like it...Don't let that big \$1.00 price tag on the front of this issue scare you. Subscriptions remain at \$5.00 a year (six issues). The reason that individual copies are now \$1.00 is so we could get ourselves a fancy distributor to spread LITTLE SANDYs far and wide across the country. At 85 cents, a distribution deal wasn't possible; at \$1.00, there will soon be a regular epidemic of the little rascals at your favorite far-out book and record stores. Dealers interested in handling the one and only THE LITTLE SANDY REVIEW are urged to write to: Oak Publications, 165 W. 46th St., NYC 10036....The new issue of HOOTENANNY is out, and it has improved some (if one discounts the incredible cover story); Sam Charters, John Cohen, and Ralph Rinzler have articles, while Cohen and Dave Van Ronk contribute some record reviews...News is out of another new folk magazine, FOLK MUSIC. A bimonthly for "adults" is how we've heard it described. Sounds promising....Due to a time-honored LSR tradition, this issue will not contain half of what we promised it would in #28. Hence, don't look for reviews of Bill and Charlie Monroe, Cisco Houston, Peter La Farge, Mark Spoelstra, Alan Lomax, Peggy Seeger, the jug bands, Eric Von Schmidt, or the Weavers; nor will you find the INTERVIEW WITH OURSELVES by Nelson and Pankake. But, you will find of host of reviews not announced, plus a dandy and definitive article on Pete Seeger and some great pictures by Dave Gahr of the Great Lean One. And next issue, you may find all that we promised to deliver in this one, plus more...Dig the latest outrageous folk advertising bit: "EDDY ARNOLD, the true American Eddy's new album is full of the 'folk' music he sang ew there was any other kind. That's what makes his EEN so special, his BLOWIN' IN THE WIND so RCA-Victor ad in SHOW). Hmmm, a new candidate for thorship controversy...Wedgely Todd is starting his ompany and is going after the new young talent. More to audition for Wedgely in LSR #30, bigger and better see you in May, folks.

--PAUL NELSON, JON PANKAKE, BARRY HANSEN

"Subscribe Now!," He Said \$\$\$\$\$fully!



Bob Dylan

Photograph by Dave Gahr

## RATINGS

|       |           |
|-------|-----------|
| •     | Poor      |
| ••    | Fair      |
| •••   | Good      |
| ••••  | Very Good |
| ••••• | Excellent |

record reviews

## Editors' Column

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--PAUL NELSON, JON PANKAKE, BARRY HANSEN

"Subscribe Now!," He Said \$\$\$\$\$fully!

4



Bob Dylan

Photograph by Dave Gahr

### RATINGS

|       |           |
|-------|-----------|
| *     | Poor      |
| **    | Fair      |
| ***   | Good      |
| ****  | Very Good |
| ***** | Excellent |

record reviews

JEAN REDPATH: SKIPPING BAREFOOT THROUGH THE HEATHER  
(Prestige International 13041)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

JEAN REDPATH: SONGS OF LOVE, LILT, AND LAUGHTER  
(Elektra 224)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

Like Ewan MacColl, Jean Redpath has made herself into a walking repository of a wide portion of the Scottish folk music spectrum, knowing more and better and a greater variety of songs than would be possible in the lifetime of even the most dedicated field singer. Though she has a traditional background, it has provided her primarily with the musical instincts and the ear that have channeled her talent into what is now a highly developed and expressive vocal style. She has, like any good product of the Anglo-American folk song revival, collected the bulk of her material from other singers, and has scoured books and phonograph records. Again like MacColl, she has, at least in her American performances, accepted accompaniment from tasteful city-billy musicians (Walter Raim and Art Rosenbaum on Prestige; Art Podell on Elektra) as a sop to audiences impatient with the unencumbered solo voice.

The Prestige album suffers slightly from inferior recording and the lack of Elektra's valuable song text booklet, but contains an astonishing wealth of material; THE BONNIE LASS O'FYVIE (America's PRETTY PEGGY-O) MAGGIE LAUDER, THE CRUEL MOTHER, and the haunting murder ballad, THE BANKS OF RED ROSES, are likely to become Jean's most admired recorded performances. The Elektra disc is the more handsome production, but is Jean's third record in the space of a year: there is only the slightest indication of a strain on the singer's repertoire in the inclusion of a few similar-sounding songs and the Irish SHE MOVED THROUGH THE FAIR, although the material is a bit less interesting and diversified than on either the Prestige or Jean's first Elektra ballad record. We hope that Jean will not fall into the misfortune of the Clancy Brothers, who simply ran out of songs and were, of necessity, forced into gobbling up anachronous Scots and English material from LPs. Jean is too welcome and too good an example to our folk song revival to be tarnished by its professional demands.

(Reviewers: Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake)

**SUBSCRIBE NOW!**

TOM PALEY, ROY BERKELEY, ARTIE ROSE: THE OLD RELIABLE  
STRING BAND (Folkways 2475)

Album Rating: \*\*\*

A great big old-timey welcome for the Old Reliable String Band, Tom Paley's dedicatedly amateur and spare-time Ensemble for the Preservation and Enjoyment of Fiddle, Banjo, and Guitar Music! Tom and his new cohorts have come up with a sound of their own, musically subdued and often frankly experimental (I'M THINKING TONIGHT OF MY BLUE EYES performed in Charlie Poole-style is a treat), short on rehearsal time, but long on enthusiasm and humor (the photo of the band in the liner notes featuring fiddle, dulcimer, and Paley dolefully belting a slide trombone is a typical touch). Tom's banjo and guitar artistry and Artie Rose's dexterity on fiddle, mandolin, and dobro provide the group with instrumental oomph, while Roy Berkeley's accomplished old-timey singing and yodeling (dig BLUE YODEL for the best city recreation of a Jimmie Rodgers blues yet) share vocal duties with Paley. The group's material centers around what has become "standard" fare for revivalist old-timey bands (FLY AROUND MY PRETTY LITTLE MISS, BURY ME BENEATH THE WILLOW, WILLIE MOORE, BILE THEM CABBAGE, LITTLE BIRDIE), but highlights just enough original musicianship to reveal the worth of the Reliabilities' collective years of study of the music. Rose's mandolin interpretations of CHEROKEE SHUFFLE and HODNEY'S GLORY are especially fine in this respect. Due to Paley's uncertain future as a professional musician (he's now studying and traveling in Europe), the Old Reliable String Band is probably a one-shot outfit. While it doesn't yet have the marksmanship to hit dead center, the band is sufficiently near the bellybutton of old-timey fun to merit a future.

(Reviewers: Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake)

MERCY DEE WALTON: PITY AND A SHAME  
(Prestige Bluesville 1039)

Album Rating: \*\*\*1/2

Mercy Dee Walton, the piano-player and singer who hit the R&B best-seller lists in the early 1950s with a nice old-time blues, ONE ROOM COUNTRY SHACK, died in late 1962, shortly after this album was made. The disc is a fine memorial. Walton, a veteran of many Texas house parties and who later followed the sun to California, does eight languid, appealing blues and one jump number, with occasional assistance from harp man Sidney Maiden and drummer Otis Cherry.

Walton's piano technique was quite limited, but he made the most

of it, achieving an impressive sound that backed up his gently nostalgic originals beautifully. His vocal style was a good deal more subtle and intimate than that of most pianists. His original blues on the set are often very poetic, and, without the sentimental frosting often indulged in by some more skillful pianists, they come across directly and most artfully. SHADY LANE is a masterpiece, crowning this most appealing collection of fine blues.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

REPRISE: THE MUSIC OF THE CARTER FAMILY...

GREAT ORIGINAL RECORDINGS BY THE CARTER FAMILY  
(Harmony 7300)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

A COLLECTION OF FAVORITES BY THE CARTER FAMILY  
(Decca 4404)

Album Rating: \*\*\*1/2

BILL CLIFTON: THE CARTER FAMILY MEMORIAL ALBUM  
(Starday 146)

Album Rating: \*\*

The musical influence of the first family of country music not only continues unabated (witness Joan Baez's occasional outbursts of Sara Carter mannerisms), but seems to be gaining ground in commercial appeal. The release of a second Harmony LP by Columbia and the decision of Decca to go whole hog with a major LP devoted to Carter reissues seems to indicate that the initial feelers on Camden and Harmony proved profitable to the companies owning the backlog of Carter masters. Could this be a healthy and encouraging sign of the times to come?

GREAT ORIGINAL RECORDINGS BY THE CARTER FAMILY is superior to its predecessor in that the sound of the early recordings has not been echoed up or otherwise tampered with, but (and this is true for the Decca issue as well) no stand has been taken as to the criterion for title selection. The huge backlog of Carter recordings, as is to be expected with any group that recorded as extensively as they did, contains a good deal of dross along with the gold. Any reissue of old-time country recordings must be carefully winnowed; the legitimate folk music must be given preference over the secondary topical and composed material of the day. Interest, except for specialists, will run low on the awkward and naive religious titles included here, charming though they may be to those conversant with the total body of Carter recordings. I FOUND YOU AMONG THE ROSES, a sentimental tune distinguished by Maybelle Carter's lovely guitar accompaniment is of interest in its own right, but the solo by A. P. Carter, the last

a rarity in itself. But the four prime titles presented here will compensate for the general lack of editorial discrimination in compiling the disc. BUDDIES IN THE SADDLE, a composition of Maybelle's (according to the notes), is sung in the exuberant, hard harmonies of the earliest Carter style (a style that had largely been abandoned by the Family when they recorded for Columbia in the weary years of 1935-1940). KISSING IS A CRIME and GIVE HIM ONE MORE AS HE GOES are comic masterpieces on the topic beloved of all old-time musicians, the awkwardness of the country man in the face of the arduous task of "courtin'." They are performed with all the sweetness and wit the Carters were capable of lending this type of song. BEAR CREEK BLUES features Maybelle cutting loose in a display of flatpicking that is the origin of the style of such modern masters as Doc Watson, and the song is one of the white blues genre at which the Family excelled in performing.

A COLLECTION OF FAVORITES BY THE CARTER FAMILY contains reissues of recordings dating from near the end of the Family's professional career, which terminated in 1943. Like the Harmony disc, there are superb titles contained here and there among a generally pedestrian selection.

The finest song and performance on the disc is HELLO STRANGER, another white blues number with outstanding guitar work by Maybelle, and thrilling alternate singing by her and Sara. Here is a fresh and fast-moving lonesome song which ought to be picked up by a large number of citybillies; it is the Carters at their very best. Hardly inferior is LITTLE JOE, an outrageously inaudible song about a dying boy, sung briskly to a genuinely inspiring melody with all the passion the Carters alone can bring to old-timey sentimentality. STERN OLD BACHELOR is given a definitive rendition by the Carter girls, complete with one of the catchiest choruses ever recorded by the Family. COAL MINER'S BLUES is one of the more realistic pieces composed by the Carter Family, and its authentic blues feeling stands in sharp contrast to JEALOUS HEARTED ME, in which the Carter blues genre is considerably degraded toward the ephemeralty of pop music. The pseudo-Mexican flavor of some of the pop music of the 1940s is reflected in YOU ARE MY FLOWER, a very popular Carter piece whose influence is still felt in the country music field: the Louvin Brothers sing a composition of their own called KENTUCKY to the same tune and in much the same musical style.

Both the Decca and Harmony albums, uneven though they are, contain enough of the Carter magic to be worthwhile purchases to all but the most obtuse listeners.

Bluegrass musician Bill Clifton essays an attempt at a Carter tribute with a **CARTER FAMILY MEMORIAL ALBUM**. Clifton has a reputation as a knowledgeable and steadfast supporter of old-time music, and probably meant well. The selection of titles, the best appearing on any LP by or about the Carters, indicates he has good taste in appreciating the music of the group. But Clifton's Bluegrass arrangements (with Smiley Hobbs on banjo, Tommy Jackson on fiddle, Mike Seeger on autoharp, etc.) are noisy and fulsome compared to the taste with which similar experiments have been successfully conducted by Flatt and Scruggs, and his lead singing is blandness at its most irritating.

The futility of the album, its hopeless "sincerity" (how that word is misused in internal country music commentary!), is exemplified in **LITTLE JOE**, that paragon of old-time morbid nostalgia, transformed into something hideous by Clifton's grotesque crooning and Jackson's walling fiddle.

**STERN OLD BACHELOR** and the moving **CANNONBALL BLUES** fare much better under more restrained handling, but perhaps the best recommendation LSR can make for the album is that it contains valuable and unavailable Carter titles, fine songs such as **GREEN FIELDS OF VIRGINIA**, **BRING BACK MY BLUE EYED BOY TO ME**, and **I'LL BE ALL SMILES TONIGHT**, which ought to be heard and enjoyed by all who love the music of the Carters. Thus, the record will hold a position of tentative value on the market pending its supplanting by either more Carter releases or by more knowledgeable revivalists of the Carter Family's songs and style.

(LSR #30 will feature a review of the new RCA-Victor Carter Family release, 'MID THE GREEN FIELDS OF VIRGINIA, 2772.)  
(Reviewers: Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake)

#### A KEOKUK HAMLET...

**ED McCURDY: LYRICA EROTICA, Volume One** (Prestige International 13044)  
Album Rating: \*\*

**ED McCURDY: LYRICA EROTICA, Volume Three (WOMEN'S DELIGHT)** (Prestige International 13050)  
Album Rating: \*\*

In the liner notes to one of these albums, John Greenway notes that "Since the publication of (Francis James Child's) **ENGLISH AND SCOTTISH POPULAR BALLADS**, some 700 legal collections of English language folk songs have been published, but not one contains an unexpurgated bawdy song." Greenway could well have added that this condition holds doubly true for the more than

1000 albums of recorded folk music—including **LYRICA EROTICA**.

In the interest of fairness, it must be pointed out that none of the songs on these discs can be called folk songs, for all were written by British poets of varying abilities in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries; McCurdy seems to have learned all of them from print. Those of us who appreciate the lyricism of true folk song will find the extreme literary sophistication of these song texts dry and boring. As for the eroticism, anyone so decadent as to be titillated by the word-play and pastoral mincing of 17th century shepherdesses and courtiers will have a gay, mad time with these records.

McCurdy has developed a nice manner of presenting this material, rolling his r's and enunciating and projecting like a vaudeville Hamlet playing to the balcony in Keokuk. Peter and Isabel Gardner are in their element providing Ed with pseudo-chamber music backgrounds, and Sandy Bull produces clever harpsichord harmonies and chords on his banjo. All very erotic, we hasten to assure you. Judging by the success of McCurdy's **DALLIANCE** series on Elektra, there is a solid market for this fluffy stuff, but it is improbable that any folk music fan will trade McCurdy's entire "erotic" record output for one performance of Sam Larner singing **MAIDS, WHEN YOU'RE YOUNG, NEVER WED AN OLD MAN**, or for any of the field-recordings of genuine erotic folk songs on Caedmon's **SONGS OF SEDUCTION** album.

(The second volume in this series, **LYRICA EROTICA, Volume Two, A WEE THREAD O'BLUE**, Prestige International 13048, by the excellent Scottish singer and grandson of folklorist Gavin Greig, Arthur Argo, will be reviewed in a future LSR.)

(Reviewers: Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake)

#### IDOLS, IDOLS, IDOLS ...

**JOAN BAEZ IN CONCERT** (Vanguard 9112)

Album Rating: \*\*

**JOAN BAEZ IN CONCERT, Part 2** (Vanguard 9113)

Album Rating: \*\*

**BOB DYLAN: THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'** (Columbia 2106)

Album Rating: \*\*\* or \*\*

Baez and Dylan, Dylan and Baez. Robert Shelton tied the sappy symbolic knot in the March issue of **HOOTENANNY** ("the national folk singing magazine"). The cover screamed, in the best Abbott and Costello or Frankstein Meets Dracula fashion, "**JOAN BAEZ MEETS BOB DYLAN**." Once inside, we got **TRUE CONFESSIONS** and **MODERN ROMANCE: "THE VOICE MEETS THE POET."** "HE SPEAKS FOR ME, SHE SINGS FOR ME," ad nauseam.



**Joan Baerz**

Photograph by Dave Gahr

Nothing like it since the Monitor met the Merrimac, folks! Our intelligence was not only trampled on, but fairly beaten to death. One wouldn't be surprised if Baez or Dylan never spoke to Shelton again. They certainly don't need that kind of bootlicking.

Both Baez and Dylan have new records out, but, aside from this and the fact that both are phenomenally popular among our younger folk fans, have little else in common. She continues on her melancholy way; he keeps on hard travelin'. Stylistically, the Meeting has changed neither one.

In his liner notes to the first of the Joan Baez albums, Manny Solomon (Freudian slip: Solomon) very nearly gives the whole thing away by stating: "Heine once said that literature is a graveyard in which we wander, searching out and embracing the headstones of those ideas which are closest to our own beliefs." He goes on to say, before floating away in his own feathered prose, that "It is the living we seek amongst the dead." But, before this launching, he has instilled the word "graveyard" into our minds, and, try as she might, Miss Baez, in performing the 29 songs that make up the two records contained in the predominantly funeral black record jackets, cannot drive it out (she makes really only two half-hearted efforts); indeed, Miss Baez seems to court Hamlet's ghost as ardently as Mr. Solomon searches for truth in his circuitous scribbling. Her chronic long face apparently helps satisfy a youthful audience which craves for something it can take seriously (ditto Dylan's *MASTERS OF WAR* period), without too much esthetic exertion; her deadly, somber excessively introverted style makes a dandy crutch for people who somehow want to hear "folk music," but are as yet incapable of appreciating, or even recognizing, the real thing. The real tragedy here is that Miss Baez doesn't seem to want to try to escape this sort of ghoulish image. John Cohen, in a recent *SING OUT!* article, assures the world that she has a fine sense of humor and deep respect for traditional music; yet, her records find her rigorously contemplating her own navel at the bottom of a dark well, her attention apparently focused on something she obviously does not want to project to her audience. Almost every song she sings, be it ballad or not, soon dissolves into a moony puddle of interior emotion; the understatement of the year would be to say that she has an alarming lack of change of pace. (Her *RAILROAD BILL*. In Part 2 is particularly ludicrous and rendered out of context; poor *BILL* has the life drained right out of him in this listless, dreamy treatment.) There are two good songs, one on each album. In #9112, we get a very good, if somewhat cautious, Sara Carter-type job on the Carter Family's *GOSPEL SHIP*; here, voice and guitar project

a solid country sound, and both feet are out of the grave for a change. In #9113, she does a rousing (yes, rousing) LONG BLACK VEIL (please ignore the irony here). These songs, plus BANKS OF THE OHIO, PAL OF MINE, and ENGINE 143 on her second Vanguard album (9094), represent the only listenable and valid folk material she has yet presented in her four albums. As an urban folksinger, she cannot hold a candle to Peggy Seeger, Hally Wood, or Hedy West (although she may have more inherent potential than all three of them).

Yet, while one often wishes that the impressionable young American folk fan would chose a more lively image than this reverse Brigitte Bardot in the black burlap shroud, one also realizes the fantastic talent that one day may emerge from Miss Baez. Should she ever be able to harness all that floating emotion into valid artistic channels, we may yet have a fine urban folksinger. The main difference between Joan Baez and camp followers Judy Collins, Carolyn Hester, and the rest of the cheaper-grade imitations is that Miss Baez has the talent. Maybe one day she'll decide to use it.

Style has never been a problem with Bob Dylan. He's always had it to burn. The trouble often has been what he's burned it on. After a brilliant start as a straight folksinger and songwriter in the folk song vein (BOB DYLAN, Columbia 1779), he suddenly got bit by the bug of abstract Significance, or Significance emptied of all significance. The press agents and journalistic drum-beaters swiftly began to inflate and construct a "legend" of the daring Rebel-Hero Speaking For His Generation Against All Wrongs. In THE FREEWHEELIN' BOB DYLAN (Columbia 1986), Dylan's image had already started to rise above the ground into a curious fog of both self-importance and self-pity. His words and music now seemed filtered through "the Dylan image" before they reached their audience, and their effect was strangely flat once they finally did arrive. Clearly, here was a man who had started to believe his own publicity, and his art suffered for it. He was now to be called a Poet, not a mere folksinger. And he went on and on in A HARD RAIN'S A-GONNA FALL, MASTERS OF WAR, and others, giving us the Message, which hardly proved to be any more unique than the usual Stanley Kramer "think" movie. In A HARD RAIN, he even evoked his own Christ symbol, but fortunately did not try to walk on water.

Happily, Bob's third album, THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN', finds him climbing back up the ladder again. There is still too much of the BROADSIDE type of social evangelism for our jaded intellects, but then, we've read a little Nathanael West and even walked around

the block once or twice by ourselves; furthermore, we don't even believe that all poor and working folk are good and that all rich people are warmongering, Negro-hating bastards. (And one Villager singing to another about segregation hardly seems the answer to anything. We keep remembering what James Baldwin said about white liberals). However, Dylan has kept his head out of the sand long enough to give us four fine songs—songs that no one else on the current folk song scene could have written. (No irony intended there.) BOOTS OF SPANISH LEATHER, ONE TOO MANY MORNINGS (the son of DON'T THINK TWICE, IT'S ALL RIGHT), and NORTH COUNTRY BLUES are superb, while THE LONESOME DEATH OF HATTIE CARROLL, although it has some BROADSIDE-like flaws in the last verse, is one of the best songs Bob has ever written.

In all but the more conventional final verse of HATTIE CARROLL, Dylan is functioning at a fantastic artistic level. The imagery of the cane and table, repeated over and over, and the singsongy use of "William Zantinger" are just right, and almost completely free of sticky sentimentality—a good, hard, tight song with real strength ("And you who philosophize disgrace and criticize all fears" is a line with much meaning). Hattie Carroll, the 51-year-old servant who "emptied the ashtrays at a whole other level," and the 24-year-old Zantinger, twirling his cane, are characters swiftly sketched in short, sure strokes. While the gratuitous act is not investigated very deeply, the investigation is powerful, and done with great (and almost cinematic) art.

Other songs are less satisfying. WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE and ONLY A PAWN IN THEIR GAME rise about as high as they can in their particular genre; Dylan seems to enjoy pole-vaulting without a pole. BALLAD OF HOLLIS BROWN and WHEN THE SHIP COMES IN are only so-so, and really not very interesting. The title song, THE TIMES THEY ARE A-CHANGIN', seems to exist merely as sop for the parent-defying teenage ego. The album's final song, RESTLESS FAREWELL, gives off the same kind of rank self-romanticizing odor that Dylan's recent pathetic BROADSIDE "article" did. The NEWSWEEK rumors are alluded to here in the feeblest, sickest sort of way.

The album notes, too, are written in the famous Dylan dialect (usually referred to as the highest form of Poetry among his fans). In them, he mentions our favorite film, Truffaut's SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER, by misquoting the last line, "Music, man, that's where it's at," and misunderstanding at least half the point of the line (and the film). While the line may be "religious," as Dylan claims, it is also the most obvious high parody, a possibility that apparently never occurred to Dylan, the one-time "Chaplin tramp"



of folk music. (Bob's misconception here seems important in understanding his "new" music.) The beauty of the film is that it is both reality and parody at the same time, and one needs more than one track in the mind to see this. There are far more things on heaven and earth than are reflected in a Bob Dylan song.

(Reviewers: Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake)

(Our Los Angeles editor, Barry Hansen, submitted the following review, giving the album a mere \*\* rating. The reader is invited to pick his poison.)

Bob's third album should firmly establish him as the Poet Laureate of the Socially-Conscious Generation. The songs, all his own, brood all over the dark world of the headlines and back pages: Medger Evers, warmongering politicians, a South Dakota farmer who murdered his family, a Southern tobacco grower who murdered a Negro maid, hard times in Dylan's northern Minnesota iron country, and so on. None of these is another BLOWIN' IN THE WIND; all of them are on a much more grandiose scale, stringing out into involved and lengthy dirges.

Gone is the freewheeling, slashing wit of his second album, along with the musical liveliness of the first. With one slight exception (WHEN THE SHIP COMES IN), the set is 45 minutes of gloom. He goes from morbid pathos to seething irony to lachrymose nostalgia. A few numbers are individually compelling (the title song, and HOLLIS BROWN, the song of the South Dakota murderer, which Dylan wrote some time ago). But the whole is just too much; the individual tragedy of the best songs is all but drowned in the album's saturation-level pessimism.

Musically, this is by far Dylan's weakest album. The guitar is clean, but monotonous and rather dimly recorded. The singing is not bad (it is, really, inseparable from the songs). But several numbers are rendered almost unlistenable by Dylan's capricious and erratic changes of tempo. WITH GOD ON OUR SIDE, which I suspect is a sincere attempt at high seriousness, becomes a painful monstrosity.

Dylan contributed some 822 lines of free-association blank verse for the notes; they fill the cover and spill over onto an insert. There's no doubt the man has a lot to say. But I'm afraid this album will only communicate to those who use music as a vehicle for a kind of spiritual masochism. I hate to think where this might lead Bob and the listeners.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

BUKKA WHITE: MISSISSIPPI BLUES, Volume One (Takoma 1001)  
Album Rating: \*\*\*\*

Back in 1960, the name of Bukka White suddenly became a legend with the release of his FIXIN' TO DIE on RBF's THE COUNTRY BLUES album (RF 1). There were fabulous rumors—something about his being captured by police at his last record session and led off in chains to Parchman Farm, where he supposedly died of brutal treatment. To many, he was a remote hero of musical antiquity. Yet, through all these years, Bukka White was living, entertaining, playing, even recording. It's a bit frightful to think how far removed the "folk music world" is from the world in which Bukka lived and played: until John Fahey and Ed Denson contacted him last year, he was completely unaware that anyone had been looking for him.

Booker T. Washington White (whose name was phonetically misspelled on the old record labels) is, if anything, more vigorous now than he used to be. He plays a steel-bodied National guitar, using several tunings with a distinct style for each one. Most frequent is an open E minor (EBEGBE) in which the top two strings are fretted with a bushing worn on Booker's left little finger. (Since he never bars all six strings, one never hears the E minor chord.) Booker also uses standard EADGBE and an open C played knife-style with the guitar flat on his lap. (For more details, see John Fahey's liner notes.)

His singing and playing are in the best Mississippi delta vein. Most evident is the violently pulsating rhythmic conflict of two against three, and three against two, voice against guitar. (Compare this to the more flowing rhythm of, say, Brownie McGhee.) Bukka's picking (bass strings strummed with the thumb, played off against the bushing-fretted treble strings in the open E minor tuning) is also characteristic of Mississippi; compare Robert Johnson. Unlike Johnson, however, he varies his normal high baritone voice not with falsetto, but with a false bass like that of another Johnson, Blind Willie. In fact, Booker's sound on the spiritual HEAVENLY WAY is very close to Blind Willie's.

Booker's texts are some of the greatest ever sung at their best, they approach Robert Johnson's in poetic brilliance, and they are much more unified. On this set, he has especially fine verses for SHAKE 'EM ON DOWN, ARMY BLUES, and ABERDEEN. Also very evocative are his two "train pieces," half-spoken and half-sung in the ancient "canté-fable" form.

Booker also plays the piano. And when he does, it is interesting to note his drastic change of singing style. He takes up the shorter phrases and ahead-of-the-beat timing made famous by Leroy Carr, and dozens of others after and probably before him.

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There is certainly no lack of youthful vigor on this album; Booker has probably preserved this quality better than any other blues man of his era. There is, in fact, almost too much vigor. Booker gets into a tune, and he's liable to bang away ferociously at the thing for six minutes, repeating himself several times. Inevitably, his singing begins to lose sensitivity; one sadly misses the tragic expressiveness of many songs from his 1940 session with Washboard Sam (FIXIN' TO DIE, STRANGE PLACE BLUES).

But Booker still has considerably more to offer than most, and this Takoma album has most faithfully reproduced his current singing and playing. It's a fine production, especially the notes, which are the most sensible to appear on a blues album in years.

The company operates out of Box 2233, South Berkeley Station, Berkeley 3, California.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

HARRY AND JEANIE WEST: SONGS OF THE SOUTHLAND

(Folkways 2352)

Album Rating: \*\*\*1/2

The prevailing commercial country music "sound" of the period when Harry and Jeanie West began singing, the late 1940s, has left its indelible mark upon the style of their performing. Although, in more recent years, the two have demonstrated a commendably catholic view of source material, choosing songs from tradition and the earliest years of commercial recordings as well as from the post-Depression years, they have tended to perform the entire scope of their repertoire with the mannerisms which are now well-known as the "Harry and Jeanie sound": phrasing, harmony, and projection in the Molly O'Day cast from Jeanie, sophisticated mandolin breaks of the type developed by Bill Monroe and the Blue Sky Boys from Harry, and the inevitable dobro (the big country instrument of the '40s) accompaniment of Artie Rose.

As a result of the inflexibility of their performing style, the success of the West's music has come to depend to a great extent upon the degree of compatibility of their material and singing. Happily, SONGS OF THE SOUTHLAND contains material which is complimented by the West's single-minded musical approach: the hillbilly songs, white blues, and recent gospel songs developed concurrently with extensive Southern radio broadcasting and Grand Ole Opry-type touring shows. SUGAR CANE MAMA, a yodeling blues from Cliff Carlisle, is the most refreshing and listenable Harry and Jeanie side in years, and the two do almost equal justice to the likes of CURLY HEADED BABY, HILLS OF ROANE

COUNTY, and ROSA LEE MCFALL. The Wests unfortunately lend their ill-fitting cliches to JENNIE JENKINS and FREE LITTLE BIRD as well, the only two really stiff and hidebound performances on the album.

(Reviewers: Paul Nelson and Jon Pankake)

NEGRO BLUES AND HOLLERS (Library of Congress AFS L59)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*1/2

I HAVE TO PAINT MY FACE (Arhoolie 1005)

Album Rating: \*\*\*\*1/2

This year has seen a highly fortunate coincidence: the near-simultaneous release on LP of the results of two field-recording trips, 18 years apart, to the same regions of the Mississippi delta, the original "home of the blues". From the work of Alan Lomax (1942) and Chris Strachwitz (1960), these sets provide a fine sampling.

Marshall Stearns' selection from Lomax's work for the Library of Congress includes hollers, church singing, and blues. Two former Paramount blues singers dominate the album. Son House, one of the first generation of recorded bottleneck players, performs three blues in the same dark, intense way he did 15 years earlier on Paramount; these recordings were made in Robinsonville, Mississippi, the same delta hamlet where Robert Johnson (who probably learned from House) grew up. Hardly less exciting is another delta guitarist, William Brown, who accompanies some standard traditional blues, quietly and movingly sung, with rich and eloquent three-finger picking, often getting a very intriguing piano-like sound. (By the way, is this the man that Robert Johnson calls "my friend, poor Willie Brown" in his CROSSROADS BLUES?) More modern influences are heard on the Library of Congress disc in David Edwards, who does an effective guitar adaptation of Big Maceo's famous Bluebird recording, WORRIED LIFE BLUES.

And 1942 was early enough for Lomax to record some fine field hollers; these show a considerable affinity with the country blues which developed from these hollers with the coming of the guitar from Mexico. Also included are two big, lively church congregations like the ones Reverend McGee recorded with on the Folkways ANTHOLOGY.

Then came the war, television, and mechanized cotton-picking; finally the Victrolas, and the guitars and harmonicas as well, made way for the communal TV set. It wasn't easy to hear live country blues on the delta in 1960, but it was still there in a few dark corners, as it is today, and indefatigable blues-hunter Chris Strachwitz went to Clarksdale that summer and,

like Lomax, recorded everything he could. His album, like the Library's, is dominated by blues, and there is still some of the old, basic blues left. The music of Sam Chatman, who (like House and Brown) recorded commercially in the 1920s, recaptures much of the feeling of what Lomax heard in 1942, albeit aged a bit and no longer as dynamic as it once was. Chatman also does a couple of spirituals, and provides (in the album's title song) a rare example of a Southern Negro protest song, and one which, I dare say, is a wee bit too frank for the sensibilities of some of the people doing this kind of thing in the North today.

Young performers in traditional style are not easy to find in Dixie these days, but Strachwitz found a good one in Robert Charles Smith, who just happened to walk into a barbershop where Strachwitz was recording the accomplished barber-guitarist, Wade Walton. After feeling the strings out to the accompaniment of Walton's razor strap, Smith does an assortment of intriguing blues in diverse styles and tunings. GOING BACK TO TEXAS comes close to the old style, while LOST LOVE BLUES shows the singer's acquaintance with Ivory Joe Hunter, et al. Also included is an exciting up tempo LONELY WIDOW.

Strachwitz also includes some piano blues—and there are two tracks from Louisiana by the redoubtable Butch Cage and Willie Thomas. There is church music, too. Instead of a hand-clapping congregation, Strachwitz includes as typical a rich-voiced solo singer (this being probably representative of the trend in the South today).

These two sets are both masterful productions by experts, and they gain immeasurably when taken together as a historical document, forming two chapters of the fabulous history of the delta blues.

(Reviewer: Barry Hansen)

— WORTH QUOTING —

"Plymouth, England, July 9 (UPI) — A man playing his electric guitar in a pub was accidentally electrocuted last night. The victim was identified as William West, 46, a dockyards worker and part-time musician."  
He Who Lives By The Sword...

Contributed by Sandy Paton

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bookshelf

THE BALLAD MONGERS, by Oscar Brand. Funk and Wagnalls, \$4.50.

Unscholarly, unanalytic description of the urban folk music revival and its background. Some surprisingly candid commentary on folk song payola, copyrights, and the Left Wing. Emphasizes the importance of such individuals as Leadbelly, Woody Guthrie, John Lomax, and Oscar Brand. Colloquial, anecdotal reading.

(P.N. & J.P.)

FOLK SONGS OF ENGLAND, IRELAND, SCOTLAND, AND WALES. William Cole, editor. Doubleday, \$7.50.

Polite parlor piano collection has no background information and conventional songs seemingly gleaned from other collections. The British field-recording in the last decade by Alan Lomax, Peter Kennedy, and Ewan MacColl (and others) has rendered this type of collection invalid.

(P.N. & J. P.)

CHANTEYING ABOARD AMERICAN SHIPS, by Frederick Pease Harlow. Barre Gazette, \$8.50.

Colorful, microcosmic collection by a writer who sailed before the mast in the 1870s. Everything from THE MERMAID to THE DARKY SUNDAY SCHOOL. Of limited interest, quite basic, it has value.

(P.N & J. P.)

THE CRITICS AND THE BALLAD. MacEdward Leach and Tristram P. Coffin, editors. So. Illinois University Press, \$5.95.

Anthology reprints of key articles on balladry from formal folklore journals and books. Writings by Charles Seeger, Bronson, Barry, etc. Fascinating—presents a variety of accepted and controversial musical, historical, and literary theories. Digs deep and assumes a high level of knowledge on the part of the reader. Rewarding, but not for the folknik.

(P.N. & J. P.)

Editors' Note: BOOKSHELF is a feature of LSR that we hope to expand in future issues. We shall soon review, in detail, new books by Alan Lomax, Harold Courlander, Jerry Silverman, Sam Charters, Frank Driggs, Jean Ritchie, and many others.



Pete Seeger

photograph by Dave Gahr

articles and columns



Pete Seeger

Photograph by Pipe-Smoking Dave Gahr

## Pete's Children:

### The American Folk Song Revival, Pro and Con

By JON PANKAKE

Alan Lomax has said that he feels the most important thing he and his father ever did in their work in American folk music was to discover and bring to the city the inspired Okie ballad-maker, Woody Guthrie, and the Negro musical genius known as Leadbelly (Huddie Ledbetter). In retrospect, it can be seen that in giving these two eager Gargantuans access to the publications, the radio broadcasts, and the recordings that would otherwise have been denied them lie the roots of America's city-based folk song revival of the past two decades.

Neither Guthrie nor Leadbelly were typical traditional American music-makers: the gifted individuality of each man had led him to create a personal body of song derived from his immediate tradition, but generally surpassing it in scope and topical relevance. Both men were flamboyant personalities who, in a manner completely the opposite of the more typically passive and introspective purveyor or guardian of a given tradition, dominated their music and made it serve them, shaped and formed it to their personal and public needs. Their songs, being essentially artfully crafted mirrors of deep and powerful personal needs, tended—and still tend—to sound meaningless in the mouths of less virile singers; unlike typical folk songs, they do not speak for a wide range of members of a culture or subculture, but resolutely serve only their masters. Nothing sounds so hollow today as the songs of Guthrie and Leadbelly coming from the lips of the generally sincere but lackluster city singers of the late '40s who first tried to wrest the songs from the personalities of their creators. Important as they were and are, the songs of Woody and Leadbelly required a vigorous and truthful interpretive voice, and none was available.

Despite the magnificence of Guthrie's and Leadbelly's talents, neither man was successful in making himself understood by America's urban population. They were country men, and they spoke and sang in a language that was largely incomprehensible to city audiences that were as yet reluctant to accept the refined offerings of Burl Ives and Dyer-Bennet. It remained for a performer who could adequately wear the seven-league boots of the

Guthrie and Leadbelly personalities and yet who would not sound alien to urban listeners to gain the ear of the public and to thus carry songs like GOODNIGHT IRENE and THIS LAND IS YOUR LAND to the far corners of the nation that were inaccessible to the Okie and the hard-bitten Negro murderer. The role became Pete Seeger's—he wore it to the hilt, and it fitted him like a glove.

All of us who participate in the folk music revival are, in varying degrees of kinship, Pete's children. It was Pete who first convinced us we could sing, that it didn't matter how good or bad our efforts were as long as we made a joyful noise unto ourselves. It was Pete who first put a banjo in our lap and told us, "Here, this thing is simple—just go ahead and play it. You'll sound great!" And such was his conviction, we did as we were told; and his conviction became our own: by God, we did sound good! Or so we thought in the flush of our discovery of ourselves.

We have all seen or heard Pete at one time or another. We have come to expect miracles of his performances, to have the hall light up and the audience take fire from his enthusiasm and indomitable optimism, and Pete has served us well. We have also, unfortunately, come to expect a certain amount of blithely slipshod musicianship, occasional tastelessness in presentation of topical material, and a kind of eager-beaver naivety that has prompted Peter Clayton to comment in JAZZ NEWS: "It was when he turned to attack that log that I began to feel uneasy. He had flung off his jacket by this time and, picking up an ax not quite as long as his banjo, he sang a work song to the rhythmic accompaniment of his own chopping. The chips, significantly, flew everywhere. This ought to have been authentic, but somehow it had the embarrassing tameness of a Zula warrior exhibited at a fairground."

The fact that Pete can inevitably triumph over his own shortcomings is the ultimate testament to the illusion his stage presence creates before us. Seeger in action is one of the phenomenal spectacles of our time, the last, perhaps, of the great platform personalities in the American tradition of Mark Twain and William Jennings Bryan. Shameless rhetorical devices become as magic in his hands: before an audience that has never seen him before he will off-handedly say, "I think I've told you many times about..." or, of a strange song, "You all know this one..." and one is immediately enrolled in his corner, a friend and intimate. His inevitable "Sing it with me..." becomes not a command, but an invitation to share his joy; the songs of Woody and Leadbelly live again, thrilling us even at one remove as they never seemed to from the lips of the masters. In the spell of his personality, we tend not to notice that his musicianship is seldom true to his inspirations, that he is, in the apt words of Nat Hentoff, more a "nimble cheerleader



Pete Seeger and Daughter

Photograph by Dave Gahr

than an excavator of the marrow of folk feeling." When Pete's up there before the microphone, we just don't care.

It is to Pete's everlasting credit that he has never overtly encouraged young singers to emulate him in any respect save sources. "Don't learn from me; learn from those who taught me." It is excellent advice. But Pete has always picked and chosen in America's great fund of folklore with an eye more attuned to using material for his own idealistic purposes than to honor the art of tradition. He has never bothered to learn the subtleties of traditional performing style, that creative magic that causes often mundane poetry and commonplace melody to seek out and thrill the secret places of our hearts. It is not the true folksinger's understanding of our hidden desires and fears that we hear in Pete's performances, but rather the legerdemain of a master platform personality. As a result, it is Pete's example that has been followed by his starry-eyed disciples rather than his advice.

Like Pete, but lacking his peculiar genius for presentation, the young revivalists have piled haphazardly into America's great traditions like so many grubby urchins grabbing at pennies thrown into the street. Flushed with Pete's encouragement, equipped with a week of perfunctory study in his banjo course, their heads still reverberating with the insane ring of the mass communications airwaves, young men and women have snatched up the life-works of centuries of dedicated country geniuses and debased the integrity and dignity of these works by performing them as though they were so many Tin Pan Alley throwaways, not cognizant of their meaning and ignorantly robbing them of their uniqueness and honor. The body of America's folk music has largely become like the proverbial Flemish description of life itself: "It is a haywain, and everybody snatches from it what he can."

The bizarre output of the phony trios, the long-haired Greenwich Village madonnas, and the drugstore cowboys did have a unique enough sound to be swallowed up by the omnivorous appetite of the record and TV money boys, and this half-baked, unpalatable mess has been whipped into a national frenzy never visualized by the Lomaxes or Pete. It is, unfortunately, the basis of the American revival—and its faults are those of Pete himself.

There are critics of the current folk song craze that totally condemn Pete's leadership and example as much as there are mainline academic folklorists who despise the work of John and Alan Lomax in the field of folk music scholarship and publication. The comparison here between Pete and the Lomaxes seems a valid one, and worth examination.

The Lomaxes were the first to attempt to popularize the songs they bagged "along the folk song trail," to present them as living

music to be used and enjoyed by those who would otherwise not have known of them — not as grist solely for the benefit of the mills located in the scholarly closets of university literature departments, as is all too often the orthodox folklorist's opinion. They collected widely and indiscriminately and, leaving the scholarly busy work of classification and comparative study to lesser talents, moved on to new projects, depositing behind them a vast fund of song collections in the Library of Congress, the University of Texas, and in private files—and incurring the enmity and scorn of academics who deplored their lack of systematic cataloging and thorough documentation as well as their predilection for the creations of the lower classes.

In like manner, Seeger has continued to tour the country (indeed, the world) inspiring countless audiences of young people to turn



Pete Seeger

Photograph by Dave Gahr



to folk music for creative recreation but without remaining behind to see to it that the new converts are directed in constructive and legitimate channels of musicianship. He comes and is immediately gone again in search of new conquests, and his neophyte disciples, left to their own devices, happily begin to bastardize the scanty legacy he has left them. The dishearteningly influential and equally atrocious production of the Kingston Trio gestated between the pages of Pete's HOW TO PLAY THE FIVE-STRING BANJO manual, nourished by his "Gee, it's fun to doodle with folk songs" philosophy.

The last three years of the revival, however, have proven the Jeremiahs who were decrying the Lomaxes and Seeger as the destroyers of American folk music a bit hasty in their judgements. About five per cent of Seeger's converts have become the core of the sort of revival within a revival that will prove constructive and beneficial to the perpetuation of America's folk music in its actual form. Scores of extremely talented and serious young people (among them Pete's kid brother and sister, Mike and Peggy Seeger) have come forward to demonstrate their respect for and interest in authentic material and its methods of performance. Some of them, groups like the New Lost City Ramblers and the Greenbriar Boys and individuals like John Hammond, Dave Ray, John Koerner, Tom Paley, Hedy West, and, yes, even Jack Elliott, have immersed themselves in the musical styles of the masters, have lived with the material and met it on its own terms, and have made it their own. In a few more years, these young talents will have nearly attained the stature of genuine traditional performers, and will in turn pass on their knowledge via example to yet a younger generation in the manner of true folk music. It is an extremely small percentage at present, yet it is a precious one—its dedication will last throughout the lives of its practitioners and its influence will be felt long after the superficial faddists have become bored with folk music and have moved on to some other temporary kick.

And it will come as a surprise to no one that the material studied and utilized by the serious generation of city performers of country music is, to a large extent, that collected for just such purposes by the Lomaxes, and made available by them through the Library of Congress and commercial field-recordings. In their turn, the dedicated youngsters have themselves gone into the field as part of their education, and a good many of the documentary folk music recordings pouring off the presses at present bear the names of Mike Seeger, John Cohen, and Ralph Rinzler.

Pete has listened politely for years to the worst and most commercialized of his "offspring," too good-natured and perhaps

too uncritical to inform them of the error of their ways, but he endorses with genuine delight and pride the accomplishments of the serious young singers, hovering over some (like Bob Dylan) as would an actual father. Perhaps all along he has known, as does the farmer who toils on barren soil, that most of his seeds will die, but that the ones that grow to maturity will seem the sweeter for their hard-won victory. And perhaps he has been waiting not for his children but for his grandchildren before evaluating the fruit of his labors.

It is a certainty that when the history of the folk song revival of the mid-20th century is written, the name of Pete Seeger will appear not only on the table of contents, but on the initial page. Whether for better or for worse yet remains to be seen—but when Pete himself is so confident, can we seriously doubt?



Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger

Photograph by Dave Gahr

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## John Cohen's Column

When Harry Smith came to Folkways Records, his first words to Moe Asch were, supposedly, "I know more about the background of American folk music than you do." This story is doubtful, but it does serve to point out the high levels of knowledge and experience that were joining forces at that time. From this meeting came a three-volume set of records that is probably the most significant and influential in the Folkways catalog, if not in the entire folk music revival.

For years, it has been referred to as the ANTHOLOGY; it is actually FA 2951, 2952 and 2953, consisting of six 12" records. It is a survey of the folk music available on commercial phonograph recordings during the years from 1927, when electronic recording made possible accurate music reproduction, to 1932, when the Depression halted folk music sales. The major part of the music is from the southeastern part of the United States.

Through selection of significant material, the records present American folk music in the last years before mass communication converted this nation to mass culture.

The ANTHOLOGY, issued in 1952, wasn't intended to start any movement; it was done with a desire to document this otherwise unheard of aspect of American culture. Every movement has its capitalizers and popularizers—Moe Asch and Harry Smith are not among them. Their role has been more as the source and wellspring from which other things come. If anything, Harry could be considered as the mystic and genius behind the "traditional folk music" movement, but his interest is neither in the movement nor the music per se. "Do as thy wilt shall be the whole of the law" is more like his motto. His desire seems to be to allow and encourage people to think and do for themselves, and to recognize the validity of each personal expression. In all the selections on the ANTHOLOGY, Harry chose the most individualistic performances; yet, this was done within a sense of tradition.

The notes and background material on the ANTHOLOGY have proven to be accurate; the research was largely done from old record catalogs and the literature of academic folklore. Although the information is factual, one can always sense a stronger intuitive force at work. Perhaps a story that he told me can better illustrate this point. Much of this collection was assembled after World War II in California. In the course of his investigations,

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Harry went to visit Sara Carter (the lead voice on all the original Carter Family recordings). She now lives in Angels Camp, California. During his time with her, she revealed that she spent a lot of time making patchwork quilts, and Harry asked to see them. As she brought them out, he took color photographs of the patterns, and asked for the name of each. If the pattern didn't already have a name, he'd ask her to make one up. Harry was doing this to seek connections between the shapes, the colors, and the names of songs which were sung by the Carter Family. The Carters did create many of their songs from older ones, and many of the names as well. I don't know of any concrete conclusions which have come from this experiment, but the very example of its possibilities opens up stimulating areas which are as yet unexplored in today's folk music outlook.

Perhaps the greatest testimony to the intuitive nature of Harry Smith is the influence and genealogy of the ANTHOLOGY itself. These albums set the stage for several important segments of today's folk music situation: the recent interest in country blues, the jug bands, the old-time string bands, and mountain ballads can be traced back to the ANTHOLOGY, the great parental ancestor. Consider some of today's urban performers who have included music from the ANTHOLOGY as an influential and integral part of their repertoire: Peggy Seeger, Joan Baez, Erik Darling, the Kweskin and Van Ronk jug bands, Pete Seeger, and the New Lost City Ramblers. Even Doc Watson has learned a few tunes directly from these recordings.

Sam Charters says that he gained much inspiration for his own explorations from the ANTHOLOGY, and the influence upon Ralph Rinzler is also evident. At least eight songs directly from the ANTHOLOGY are included in Lomax's book, *THE FOLK SONGS OF NORTH AMERICA*.

Further, quite a few of the artists on the ANTHOLOGY have been rediscovered and are now becoming evident in the recent folk festivals. It can't be overlooked that the initial interest in these artists came from the ANTHOLOGY. Clarence Ashley, Buell Kazee, Mississippi John Hurt, Gus Cannon, Ernest Stone-man, Dock Boggs, Sleepy John Estes, Furry Lewis, the Carolina Tar Heels, and Eck Robertson have been doing recordings in recent years for the current folk song scene. (The Carter Family, through Maybelle Carter, never did move into obscurity, and Bascom Lunsford has been running the Asheville, North Carolina, Festival for years.)

A further effect of the ANTHOLOGY has been to stimulate further research into similar corners of American folk music via recordings. Some day, perhaps, we shall see continued volumes

of the ANTHOLOGY, concerned with latter-day hillbilly music, Western swing, country-western music, rhythm-and-blues, and rock-and-roll.

Shortly after the ANTHOLOGY was issued on Folkways, Harry Smith sold his entire collection and moved on to other areas of interest, such as abstract movies and cat's cradle string games from primitive peoples all over the world. Also, he had prepared a fourth volume of the ANTHOLOGY, tracing the music through the 1930s and the Depression. But more about that, and about Harry and the ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC in future columns.

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## Jay Smith's Column

Many thanks to Wedgely Todd for his unsung assist on last issue's column. Who is J. P. Donleavy, he said gingerly....It is no secret that Pete Seeger's WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE? was suggested by a Russian folk song, KOLODA DUDA ("And where are the geese?/They've gone to the reeds/Where are the reeds?/The girls have gathered them"). At first blush, neither FLOWERS nor KOLODA shows any similarity to OUR GOODMAN, Child 274 ("And then he saw a saddle horse where nae horse should be"). In his notes, however, Child alludes to an Italian song, LA VIOLINA, with the lines: "Show me the mulberries/They are on the hedges/Show me the hedges/ The goats have eaten them/Show me the goats," etc. Let us stand and sing one verse of THE WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE?/THEY'RE LYING ON THE PILLOW WHERE MY HEAD OUGHT TO BE BLUES.

John Cohen's point (in LSR #28) that many of us are still carping about the same things that troubled us in the days of CARAVAN and GARDYLOO is well taken. But even John should admit we've improved a little. Nobody worries any more about the merits of HELLBOUND TRAIN, and you seldom hear the epithet, "nose-picker."...There are more than two superb girl folksingers....The Charleston, South Carolina, NEWS AND COURIER for August 11, 1963, had an article on Guy Carawan, who lives near Charleston on Johns Island. The January 19, 1964, edition of the same newspaper contained an article by Alan Lomax on the Johns Island singing gatherings of last summer....Word has it that Lomax's new book should be out soon.

Making the rounds these days as part of a syndicated television series is THE STORY OF A FOLKSINGER—HOYT AXTON. It takes the approach that folksingers are malcontents and aimless ramblers. The story opens in Hollywood with Axton stalking off the Troubadour stage to sulk in his dressing room because the Audience Doesn't Understand Art (as represented by GREENBACK DOLLAR and THUNDER 'N LIGHTNING). He has a quick drink and repairs to his pad where he finds a sexy chick on the divan. Ignoring the girl, our hero packs a suitcase, changes his shirt, and exits with two guitars—leaving behind the girl and the suitcase he packed. His begira takes him to Broken Bow, Oklahoma, hard traveling down that ribbon of highway in a Lincoln convertible and singing about hobobing and riding the blinds. In Broken Bow,

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he listens to his own records (no taste!) and goes hunting with his father. Then he highballs back to Tinseltown in time for more Art at the Troubadour. It's enough to make strong men cry.

THE BOB HOPE TV THEATER presented Hugh (Earp) O'Brien in a story about itinerant folkniks. It was bad by almost any standards. Nancy Ames appeared briefly, recovered quickly, and, after the station break, opened THAT WAS THE WEEK THAT WAS.

The wandering minstrel, as dramatized in these two programs, is an acknowledged part of folk tradition (and the likes of Wayfarin' Burl, Hard Travelin' Woody, Ramblin' Jack, and Peripatetic Pete have further glamorized his image). Even so, the antithesis of the wanderer has been the taproot of the popular folk music revival. The source material for this revival has come mainly from such folk music repositories as Appalachia, where settlers carved out their lives, and, in the process, preserved and developed our heritage of folk music.

More people should read Russell Ames' handy little THE STORY OF AMERICAN FOLK SONG. Highly recommended....Big Ed Flemming left his shrimp boat long enough to call balladeers, pickers, and yarn-spinners from all over Florida to the Sanford Jai Lal Fronton for a Heart Fund benefit (Give a Hoot for Heart!) on February 2....Oscar Brand, who is a matter of taste to some people, always does a tasteful job as Music Director of NBC-TV's EXPLORING....PLAYBOY, the philosophical girly magazine, continues its How To Succeed In Business articles by this J. Paul Getty person. If he's so smart, why ain't he rich?....The jug band revival (where is it?) marks a return to simple folk instruments like the washboard, the washtub bass, the kazoo, the jug, and the Gibson J-200 guitar....It would seem almost impossible nowadays to come up with an unusual title including the word hootenanny. Nevertheless, it has happened. The full title of a magazine mentioned briefly in this column last time (not the Shelton rag) is BASED ON THE ABC-TV HOOTENANNY SHOW. Hereafter to be referred to as BOTABCTVHS.

Driven Snow Dept.: A newspaper article on the boom in pop-folk records says that there are also increased sales for purists such as Oscar Brand, Odetta, and Pete Seeger....CAMERA THREE, the most consistently excellent program on television, recently devoted a program to Julian Bream, his guitar, and his white-bellied lute....Mississippi John Hurt made an appearance on Johnny Carson's TONIGHT SHOW. Ditto, members of the Even Dozen Jug Band....Early returns in the Jay Smith Survey indicate that Dr. Tristram P. Coffin may bury Jack Linkletter in the race for favorite folk host....Rumors persist that there will be a new folk music program on TV next year called (brace yourself)

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Leading scholars, performers and critics write for SING OUT. Feature articles concern folksong history, background on traditional singers, news of the folksong revival, discussions of controversial issues, etc. Among those whose articles have appeared in SING OUT are Sam Hinton, John Jacob Niles, Ruth Rubin, Alan Lomax, A. L. Lloyd, Richard Dyer-Bennett, and many others.

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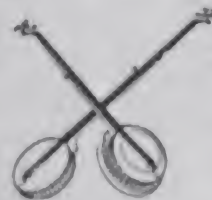
THE BIG HOOT....There is no truth to the rumor that the Music Editor of NEWSWEEK is a high school kid in New Jersey.... Whatever happened to Larry Mohr?....A paperback novel, UPTOWN DOWNTOWN, by Dennis Lynds, is an unintentional laugh-riot to any folk fan.

There have been complaints about Oscar Brand's dog food commercials on the telly. Whether or not these complaints are justified, they come pretty late. Folk material has been used for commercial jingles at least since "Pepsi-Cola Hits the Spot," which was based on JOHN PEEL. Performers include Ed McCurdy (cigarettes), Tom Glazer (cookies), Katie Lee (cameras), the Kingston Trio (soft drinks), the Limelitters (cigarettes and soft drinks), and the Brothers Four (cigarettes and soft drinks); Brand has plugged everything from car wax and cereal to the above-mentioned dog food. Last year, a program about Gary Cooper spent considerable time on the tragedy of cancer, the disease that took the actor's life. The final commercial message did not change the somber mood. The words from the sponsor were sung by the voice of Cisco Houston.



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# Songs of the American West

Edited by RICHARD E. LINGENFELTER,  
RICHARD A. DWYER, and DAVID COHEN

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## EDITORIAL...

PLUS ÇA CHANGE,  
PLUS ÇA MÊME CHOISE

According to several usually reliable sources, folk music has suffered an untimely demise. West Coast record sales are at a new low and major folk festivals are being dismissed as "irrelevant." But the electro-encephalogram from the withered corpse is showing some new waves. Strange as it seems, believe it or not, these indications are appearing from that brand of music consistently labeled as "schlock" by this magazine; "today's fast moving \$ R and R freak-out scene."

Whatever you may call the music it is still outside the confines of the new LSR, at least in the review section, but here in our editorial niche we feel we can discuss the matter safely without fear of contamination.

One need only to look about oneself to note the extensive influence of folk music on popular music on every hand, throughout this great land of ours, from the rocky coasts of Maine to the sunny coasts of California, from sea to shining sea you can see the results of this massive overdose of presumptive balderdash. For example, we have such old guardians of the bestions of pholkum as PP&M, the Travelers Three, Ian and Sylvia and the Modern Folk Quartet plugging in, turning on and freaking out and changin' with the times and raking in the bread.

The most contempo of rock groups are now riddled through with erstwhile folk musicians: Country Joe and the Fish, Big Brother and the Holding Co., the Mamas and the Papas, the Grateful Dead, the Monkees, the Kaleidoscope, the Lovin' Spoonful, Donovan and even the big daddies themselves, John, Paul, George and Ringo, were once known as a "skiffle band."

As an example of the kind of tangled skein this situation can produce, review the history of the song DIFFERENT DRUM, written, first of all, by Mike Nesmith (of the Monkees). It was first recorded by the Greenbriar Boys (remember them?), then became a hit under the aegis of an L.A. group, the Stone Poneys, named after a Charlie Patton song by a local hill-billy record collector, the lead guitarist of which used to play banjo and fiddle in a bluegrass band to which one of your Beloved Editors (we'll let you guess) also belonged at one tangential instant of time. (Thoroughly confused, yet?) We have come full circle; from rock-folk to folk to folk-rock via folk. You figure it out.

Oh, before we go on to bigger and better things this issue, we feel it important to tell you that the legendary, once out-of-print Piedmont records by the late Mississippi

John Hurt (Worried Blues and Folk Songs and Blues) are now back in print, courtesy of Bill Givens. They will be available through Origin Jazz Library. If you missed them once, don't miss them again.

(Lastly, the editors have moved again. The new addresses are:

David Polacheck-1237 Orange Grove Apt. 8  
Los Angeles, Calif.

Graham Wickham- 2307 Berkeley Ave.  
Los Angeles, Calif. 90026

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78 RECORD REISSUES part one:  
COUNTY RECORDS  
by Graham Wickham

Most anyone interested in old-time country music, as well as bluegrass, can tell you that some of the best of these records now coming out are on an esoteric New York label named "County." Further, they can tell you that "County's sherrif" (to quote a fellow reviewer) is an equally esoteric gentleman by the name of Dave Freeman. Another startling bit of information is that County consists of two, quite distinct lines, one centering on the reissuing of rare, vintage hillbilly records, the other on issuing traditional country artists recorded today.

The whole story begins in 1964. Pennsylvania Railroad mail clerk Dave Freeman had been a fan of the older style of country music for nine years, rather a few years before it was fashionable to identify one's self with the avant-gardism of "hillbilly" music. The mail clerk had been eyeing the somewhat new line of blues reissues coming from an esoteric New York firm, Orijin Jazz Library. Not only was Freeman a fan, he was a collector of these rare discs and those OJL productions acted as a catalyst through which a successful chemical reaction took place.

Freeman, utilizing a handsome piece of savings, put together the now almost legendary "County 501," a "Collection of Mountain Fiddle Music" which appeared in March, 1964. The record was greeted by enthusiastic reviews in folklore journals and record review magazine such as LSR (see #30). The reaction was quite favorable though the academics did then, and continue now, to mourn the lack of annotation on these reissues beyond title and band personnel.

It was a limited pressing (500 copies) and was soon out of print. In November, 1964, another limited edition, "Mountain Ballads" (County 502) appeared. The format was identical, though the use of ballad to cover all items was a bit broad, whereas all selections on County 501 were mountain dance tunes played on fiddle.

By the following March, Freeman, in partnership with another devotee-collector Charlie Fauret, inaugurated the 700 series, devoted to contemporary field recordings. It was not to be a limited edition, and fortunately so, for County 701 "Clawhammer Banjo" (see LSR Vol. 2, #3) has turned out to be County's fourth best-selling item.

By mid-1965, Freeman had switched pressing plants and all pressings were to be "unlimited," beginning with County 504, (a collection of mountain songs). Later that year, Freeman saw his way clear to begin a record mail order service (County Sales) and left his job with Pennsy. It is County Sales which has turned out to be the most financially rewarding end of the County firm.

To date, the best-selling album has been County 505 (the first Charlie Poole album), the second being 506 (the Gid Tanner's Skillet Lickers album), for both Poole and Tanner still enjoy considerable fame among older Southerners and the records sell very well in rural areas. Of the 700 series, 703 ("Texas Hoedown," featuring 3 contemporary Texas fiddlers) and 701 ("Clawhammer Banjo") are the best-selling discs.

Strangely enough, it is not the urban-bred collegiate or academician, nor the record collector, nor the staunch foreign fan that has supported County Records; rather, it is the country audience itself, the group that spawned the music, that buys the majority of County Records. Without them, County Records probably would not even exist. Further, they are more oriented toward the 700 series and sales of those are now higher than the 500 series discs.

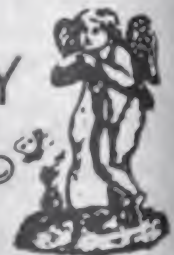
As it is now, Freeman plans on issuing one new disc per month (further swamping the beleaguered editors of LSR). But, if and when Freeman has reissued all the material that he feels is important, the 500 series will be terminated. Future 500 series discs will concentrate on regions of the South, state by state, with ten records already planned.

#### CATALOGUE OF COUNTY RELEASES

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 501- Mtn. Fiddle Music        | 701- Clawhammer Banjo       |
| 502- Mtn. Ballads             | 702- Larry Richardson       |
| 503- Mtn. Fiddle Music (v. 2) | 703- Texas Hoedown          |
| 504- Mtn. Songs               | 704- Red Allen              |
| 505- Charlie Poole            | 705- Virginia Breakdown     |
| 506- Skillet Lickers          | 706- Joe & Jeanette Carter  |
| 507- Old Time Fiddle Classics | 707- Texas Fiddle Favorites |
| 508- Mtn. Sacred Songs        | 708- Ray & Ina Patterson    |
| 509- Charlie Poole (v. 2)     | 709- Camp Creek Boys        |
| 510- The Red Fox Chasers      | 710- Red Allen (v. 2)       |
| 511- Mtn. Blues               |                             |
| 512- A Day in the Mtns.       |                             |



## THE JOHN FAHEY COLLECTANEA



(With this installment we conclude the study, in all its pristine glory, of the heretofore unresearched ballad, Child 736, THE WAXFIELD INCIDENT. In the last installment there was noted a break in the manuscript that contained the testimony of Thelonius P. Skag before EMV court of enquiry. In this installment the testimony is concluded, with a final remark from our noted scholar, Johnathan S. Fahey,

"slowly his hand came toward her throat ha Ive got you now  
you bitch your going to die yes die ha I am going to kill you  
ha you murdered poor old Jenny you threw her in the well  
(it is not clear just whom is speaking here—J.F.) you pained  
hussy you witch I hate you. In reality was Jenny's nephew  
a poor old sheep herder I used to roam the vales with poor  
old Jenny next to me and she used to help me shear the sheep  
bobbies she would enchant them with her soothing neighs she  
had a musical voice old jenny Did sometimes I wake up and I  
would see poor old Jenny shearing all the sheep bobbies allby  
herself when I was down with the ranch foreman's wife out  
on Mt. Diablo you never knew about that did you, har harr har  
I would see Jenny's smiling face all 75 white teeth that she  
had staring in the window at us there on the goddamn bed Onct  
I got up to see war Jenny was and I saw her in sub zero  
weather and you couldn't tell the sheep shearing bobby from  
the snow and I saw her searching ou ther in the moonlite But  
then Jenny went into the big citY and sold the shearings one  
time for a profit sometimes a bob or two or six and a ha'pence  
and she keep on a-sellin' and a-buyin' and pretty soon old  
Jenny became rich and had lots of sheep bobby and she had me  
a-workin' for her what I mean poor old Jenny she died the  
richest hoss in all of upper gruntgomery county and brought  
out all the sheep Ranches and bought them too from here to  
texas for all you know the underwear you are wearing under  
now was made by rich old Jenny's mill I am glad she died hey  
wake up I didn't mean to choke you wake up, I mean like..."  
(Again, the manuscript breaks off at this point, but at the  
bottom of the page we see the following) "...and I made me  
a song-ballett about it and printed it with an eagle feather  
pen on sheet of parchment and Tied it together with sinew  
and I sent it to my gal and how do you reckon it read,

Ole Jenny, Ole Jenny dont go down in the well  
today  
For then, for then you'll swell  
And this horsemeat I'm a-chawin' on don't  
taste so swell

so then we made a statue out of wax that looked like Jenny  
and we set it out in the field and called it the waxfield  
Jenny, I mean hell a hoss is nuthin' but a hoss, not even as  
good as a ole fleabit mule or schoolboy and I mean what the  
hell since when can a hoss..." (Another break in manuscript,  
apparently due to rodential meanderings and subsequent  
eliminations—J.F.) "...them hollywood fellas came out here  
the other day to take from us good ole Jenny to hollywood  
with them yep good ole Jenny is going to be a picture star

yep going to go on the aiRoplane to hollywood and make more money to add to her vast fortune here she is going to get a nose job and get her teeth capped and her chest built up at some saloon for 6 year old brokendown Jenny sure is going far in this world lemme tell you for a dead hoss is going to be pretty funny to see her on the screen I didn't kill her them hollywoodfellas did making her a star in them movies with Hoot Gibson and Broncho Billy Anderson and Elmo Lincoln and having them riding her what did they think she was a hoss? or something yep Jenny never wanted to go there what she donknow about actin nothin she shore was a good damn sheep herder she was alright then they took her off the farm and put her up with them other stars like Mary Pickford gosh darlin and don't forget Helen Twelvetrees and little Mary she shore was a fine little thing ah well and Doug Fairbanks and Richard Dix and Max Schreck and W<sup>m</sup> Hart he shore was a fine upstandin man then they had to stick Jenny up there and all the hollywood stars lost all their jobs and had to work for Jenny at her sheep farm ha it shore was funny seein fat ole Fatty Arbuckle tryin to shear sheep bobby so funny ital- (Small break in manuscript—J.F.)most made all of us cry the all them hollywood Stars they kilt pore Jenny and try to cover up their crime by sayin it was in the script I don't think that skinnin a hoss could be in the script do you..." (End of manuscript—J.F.)

I believe that that which I have summarily quoted speaks for itself and there is nothing for this writer to add except his grateful<sup>78</sup> acknowledgment for the diligence of Mr. Michael Carp.

Los Angeles, Calif. 1966-7

<sup>78</sup> Acknowledgments as set forth in Section 23 of the code of ethics for all ethnographers, anthropologists, foke-  
lorists, et al, in Labyrinthine Codes #345 (Revised 6/65)  
Bronx Publishing, Bronks, New York, pp.345-349.

#### COUNTRY MUSIC REISSUES IN JAPAN

by Norman Cohen

The real proof of our victory over Japan in 1945 is not the Potsdam Declaration but, rather, the extent to which we have succeeded in Westernizing that Asian empire. Not only have we Westernized them, we have country-and-westernized them; today, Japan, along with Australia, New Zealand, and, of course, Europe, is a ready market for American country and western music. This review will try to bring LSR readers up to date on one phase of this musical Marshall plan: the currently available (in Japan, that is) reissues of old-time and early bluegrass music.



As in this country, the leader in the reissue market in Japan is RCA Victor, with six reissue albums consisting largely of pre-1950 material. The artists are all familiar to U.S. fans, as their recordings have been reissued here also. Vi RA 5321: MID THE GREEN FIELDS OF VIRGINIA, is but for one or two titles identical with the Carter Family reissue of the same title in this country, and will not be discussed further.

Vi RA 5281: EARLY BLUEGRASS MUSIC BY THE MONROE BROTHERS, has the same cover as the U.S. reissue on Camden CAL 774, but only 5 of the 14 selections duplicate that lp. However, unlike the Camden album, all the selections on the Japanese LP are really by the Monroe Brothers duo; only one cut is by one of Charlie Monroe's later bands. Whether this is good or bad is a matter of individual taste, but at least it is more honest. Among the sides not reissued in this country are: SAINTS GO MARCHING IN, GOODBYE MAGGIE, ON THAT OLD GOSPEL SHIP, A BEAUTIFUL LIFE, HAVE A FEAST HERE TONIGHT, and, lastly, WILL THE CIRCLE BE UNBROKEN. The influence of this team of the 1930's cannot be gainsaid, but personally I feel that both Bill and Charlie reached greater musical heights after they split up. Although, they established the mandolin and guitar as the appropriate instrumental combination of the last half of the decade, Bill's picking, though it was faster than anyone else's at the time, was dull by comparison with what he created in the decade following. But some of it was, indeed, fast and sometimes it was all Charlie could do to keep up with it on the guitar back-up. ROLL IN MY SWEET BABY'S ARMS and FEAST HERE TONIGHT are the two liveliest cuts on the lp and are good for laughs for any prospective bluegrass guitarist.

Much more exciting is Vi RA 5267: GOLDEN BLUE GRASS HIGHLIGHTS Vol. 3—THE BEST OF CHARLIE MONROE. All 14 of these items are from Charlie's Kentucky Pardners, the group that recorded from 1946 - 1952. Two titles have been reissued here. The others include some of Charlie's finest material, such as IT'S ONLY A PHONOGRAPH RECORD, SO BLUE, and DOWN IN THE WILLOW GARDEN—the latter one of the best versions of that native American ballad on record. WHEN THE ANGELS CARRY ME HOME and CAMPING IN CANAANS LAND are lively spirituals. All of these Japanese releases have extensive liner notes—in Japanese, alas!—including recording dates and personnel for all selections. Most of them also give the texts of the songs in a language closely approximating English. To illustrate, I quote accurately from the transcription of THAT WILD BLACK ENGINE:

Family recordings on which Dad played banjo instead of fiddle. Bradley Kincaid's CINDY and OLD JOE CLARK utilize, like Kazee and unlike Boggs or Crockett, a vocal style deliberately urbanified and retaining scarcely a trace of rural accent. However, Kincaid does not have Kazee's compensating factor of distinguished accompaniment. Both Kincaid and Lundsford—and to a lesser extent, Kazee—filled dual roles of performer and collector; Lundsford's career has also included extensive recording for the Library of Congress and organizing and running the Asheville Folk Festival at Asheville, North Carolina, for many years. All three have been re-recorded on lp in the past decade or so. Two selections are included by Al Hopkins and his Buckle Busters: CLUCK OLD HEN and BLACK EYED SUSIE. It was Hopkins' earlier band which, in 1924, gave the name "Hillbilly" to the then-new type of recorded music. Two pieces on the lp are by Negro artists: Furry Lewis' STACKERLEE and Rev. E.W. Clayburn's TRUE RELIGION. Of the former I can do no better than to quote the perceptive liner notes:

1927年10月録音。黒人衆のアウトロー・バラード。スタックリー（スタッカーリー）は、殺人の元凶を世界を誇る（？）町メソフィスの生んだ殺し屋であり、クワを遊び人であり、ニグロの大衆分でありました。大概の他のすばい説的楽題と同じく、正確な忠実性は明らかならず。一説によると、「スタック・マー・リー」という蒸気船に因んでその名を得たスリでありたともいいます。ここでは、殺しの「若」として歌われております。歌うルイスも黒人。  
(第2面)

The album is rounded out with two selections by the Lonesome Pine Fiddlers originally recorded in 1950 on the Cozy label and then issued on Coral: PAIN IN MY HEART and LONESOME SAD AND BLUE. At the time this group included Larry Richardson and Bobby Osborne, and these were probably Bobby's first recordings.

The best way to get these albums is to know a serviceman overseas. Otherwise Disc Collector will order them for \$6.25 each. Considering the recent domestic price hike, this does not seem an unfair price.

RECORDS



(NEXT PAGE)

This record presents the engaging Edna and China Poplin in a selection of their spirited and beautiful old time music. Edna's strong guitar and fine voice were heard on a previous Folkways release (see LSR, vol. 1, # 30) along with China's driving and excellent old time banjo. Both Poplins are undiminished in strength with this new disc on Melodian.

Perhaps the most interesting cuts on the record are China Poplin's solos featuring exceptionally good two-finger picking on the banjo. His style is raggy and exciting, reminiscent of the best Roscoe Holcomb. (China's frailing is also quite fine). Among the solos are the unusual HIE AWAY, along with very good versions of standards like BOLL WEEVIL and REUBEN, and some instrumentals.

The Poplin family's excellent lyric songs like GWINE BACK TO SUMTER, SUGAR BABE, OH MARY DON'T YOU WEEP are as fine as ever; China and Edna's voices combine well, as they are brother and sister.

Unfortunately, four of the cuts, the sentimental songs, are marred by an additional singer, Margie Reece. Margie Reece, say the notes, "...started out (in) a gospel trio influenced strongly by the music of the Bailey Brothers..." Unfortunately, Miss Reece's music does not blend at all well with those of the Poplin's, and her oversmooth vocalizations only obscure, rather than complement Edna's singing. Edna's daughter, Laurie Legrand, is much better, but is only heard to good effect on one cut, OH MARY DON'T YOU WEEP.

Jack Tottle's mandolin and notes are both very nice, the recording quality is good, and the cover design is horrible.

-David Polacheck

BILLY COX: "THE DIXIE SONGBIRD" Kanawha 305 \*\*\*\*\*

Those who have enjoyed the fine songs recorded on 78's by Bill Cox and Cliff Hobbs in the 1930's will welcome this full LP by the former artist, still going strong at the age of 70.

The record includes many of Bill's own fine compositions, as well as two traditional numbers, THE BATTLE AXE AND THE DEVIL, and THE FIDDLING SOLDIER. Bill Cox' own songs are always well-written, by turns lyrical, sentimental, bluesy, humorous and religious. He belongs to a tradition of great Southern rural songwriters including; Blind Alfred Reed, Dorsey Dixon, Jimmie Tarlton and fiddler Eck Robertson's brother, Yard (see LSR, vol.2, #2).

Bill accompanies his fine singing with equally strong

guitar and harmonica. Especially good on this album are THE FIDDLING SOLDIER, ALIMONY WOMAN, BLIND BAGGAGE BLUES, and FILIPINO BABY, one of Bill's compositions that was stolen by other recording artists, and for which Bill received neither recompense nor recognition.

With such a generally excellent record, it is a shame to have to point out several annoying defects in production. The recording is generally good, but reveals several unprofessional slip-ups. The cover design is interesting, showing pictures of Bill in 1940 (a handsome blade) and in 1966, but it is printed in a hideous canary yellow. It seems Bill could have been given a better guitar to record with than the much inferior instrument used. Also, one of the songs announced on the cover, TEMPLE OF SIN, is unaccountably replaced with THE GIRL IN THE HILLBILLY BAND on the record itself. The notes, by our own Graham Wickham, are excellent but full of typographical errors and one anonymous insertion. I am informed by Mr. Wickham that one of the typos completely obscures an important point he wished to make. Galley proofs, anyone? In addition, he was given no credit for his work. All these problems are not vital, but they are annoying since they could have been avoided so easily.

-David Polacheck

AN HISTORIC REUNION: SARA AND MAYBELLE, THE ORIGINAL CARTERS  
Columbia CL 2561, CS 9361

\*\*\*½

The title of this album describes very accurately the status of this album. It contains contemporary recordings of Carter Family style songs by the backbone of the group: Sara and Maybelle Carter. (A.P. Carter died in 1960).

After A.P.'s death, Maybelle continued her musical career, but Sara, the original lead singer for the group, had not sung for many years at the time these songs were recorded. Sadly, her voice shows the years more than Maybelle's, who has been more changed by current trends in modern country music than by physical age. Nevertheless, while far below the standard of her earlier 78 performances (remember SINGLE GIRL, MARRIED GIRL?) Sara's voice is far from unlistenable. She sings quite well, duplicating with Maybelle the old Carter Family sound quite successfully, (see the review of the Carter's Harmony reissue record in this issue of the LSR). Only one song, FARTHER ON, does Sara falter noticeably. This song obviously should not have been included. Sara herself is quoted on the album notes as saying, "I can't sing it myself. I'm getting on in years and just don't have the breath anymore."

Unfortunately, all songs are of the Nineteenth century parlor-sentimental variety and, therefore, not fully representative of the Carter Family repertoire. The songs

(all of bathetic and/or religious content) tend to become monotonous after a while. The songs range from good (HIGHER GROUND, THE HAND THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE) to interesting (WHILE THE BAND IS PLAYING DIXIE, THREE LITTLE STRANGERS) to dull (FARTHER ON, SUN OF THE SOUL). The production is largely un gimmicked and respectful of the music, except for the embarrassing inclusion of a train whistle sound effect added to LONESOME PINE SPECIAL.

Johnny Cash's notes are interesting, but complete personnel data and information on all songs would have been highly desirable.

-David Polacheck

COUNTRY SOUNDS OF THE ORIGINAL CARTER FAMILY Harmony HL 7422

In the opinion of this reviewer, the Carter Family never <sup>\*\*\*\* $\frac{1}{2}$</sup>  managed to produce anything really terrible, outside of a few recorded skits with Jimmie Rodgers, so when dealing with a reissue LP of their songs, it is really a matter of whether or not my personal taste is tickled by the specific songs in the grab bag. This record ranks about half-way for me... not as interesting, perhaps, as THE FAMOUS CARTER FAMILY (HL 7280), but a whole lot more so than HOME AMONG THE HILLS (HL 7344). It includes three of what I feel to be their best songs, BLACK JACK DAVID (Child #200), SINKING IN THE LONESOME SEA (Child #286), and CANNONBALL BLUES (which borrows tunes and some wandering lines from WHITEHOUSE BLUES.) Besides these, there are many others almost as good; including WILL YOU MISS ME WHEN I'M GONE, which probably inspired the Woody Guthrie version by the same name, and EAST VIRGINIA BLUES #2—an 'answer' song which capitalizes on, what I feel to be, the Carters' loveliest tune and treatment, with only slightly inferior words than the original. As a matter of fact, they're all good! What the hell, boys, it's only \$1.98!

Discographers will mourn the customary lack of specific data (although recording years are given) and folklorists will be interested in the reassertion of A.P.'s authorship of both Child #200 and #286.

-Jim Griffith

WESTERN SWING

Old Timey LP 105

\*\*\*\*

"Western Swing" is the name given in the mid-1940's to the then existing form of a musical style which had been developing primarily in Texas and Oklahoma since about 1930. The musicians who participated in this development were adapting their style, which was originally oriented toward the fiddle breakdown and waltz, to the popular jazz music of the day. One fiddler who regularly played for house dances in East Texas recalls that as radios became more prevalent, his group received more and more requests for popular songs. They

learned these from records and in so doing assimilated much of the style of the jazz band.

Once the style was set, a variation in the process occurred. Negro blues recordings and Southeastern style fiddle tunes were adapted to Western band styles by the groups. Thus developed a unique musical style that became the most popular music among the people of the Southwest for two decades, therefore deserving much more recognition than it has received.

This album is the first to take a broad look at the style. The criteria for evaluating an LP of this nature are generally three: 1) the appropriateness of the selections, 2) the quality of the remastering (all sides are reissues), 3) the accuracy and completeness of liner notes.

The selections are claimed to represent "unique and spirited performances, to illustrate various influences, and present a sampling of the most important artists..." This plan is generally carried out, but one might wonder why three Wills steel guitar instrumental selections were included, excellent performances though they are, but none by W. Lee O'Daniel and his Hillbilly Boys, the Swift Jewel Cowboys, the Range Riders, the Wanderers, and the Tune Wranglers, and only one by the outstanding Light Crust Doughboys, by far the best group, musically. Also, FRENCH TWO STEP, by the Hackberry Ramblers a Cajun swing band, seems out of place as it is merely a fiddle instrumental without "takeoff solos" (take-off solos being the term Western musicians borrowed from jazz, which they refer to as the point where Western swing began.)

However, some of the best examples of the style are included. Bob Wills' STEEL GUITAR RAG is, in my opinion, the finest recording ever made in the style. The first two strains of this composition seem to have been learned from an Okeh recording made in the early 1920's by a Negro, Sylvester Weaver, entitled GUITAR RAG. But steel guitarist Leon McAuliffe formed a three part composition from this in which he uses and extends the devices of each part in the following part and builds the whole to a climax. Other selections which should be singled out are Boyd's UNDER THE DOUBLE EAGLE, and SPANISH FANDANGO and Brown's BROWNIE STOMP.

As to the other two aspects, the remastering seems good and the original discs are generally in clean condition. The liner notes are generally thorough, especially as to the various factors and kinds of music that shaped the style, but seem somewhat disorganized in spots. The influence of Mexican music is discussed but its main manifestation, the twin fiddle leads featured by many of the groups is not mentioned. Two minor points were noted. While it is true in a strict sense that the original Light Crust Doughboys didn't record, the group did make one record in February, 1932 with Sleepy Johnson replacing Arnsperger. Also, the Light Crust Doughboys

heard on this record did not replace Bob Wills when he left Burris Mills. There was an interim group led by W. Lee O' Daniel.

This LP provides a good sampling of an important style which is basic to an understanding of the development of country music. It is the first general sampling (Columbia has reissued several Bob Wills sides) but, I hope, not the last.

-Fred G. Hoepfner

BLUE GRASS TIME—BILL MONROE Decca DL 4896 \*\*\*

Here is an album on which I expected to hear quite a bit of accomplished bluegrass material; unfortunately, I was a bit let down. The liner notes indicate that this is Bill Monroe today and that the musicians are the sidemen who are responsible for much of what constitutes the Blue Grass Boys' current achievements. The core of the Blue Grass Boys on ten of the twelve cuts are: Richard Greene, fiddle; Pete Rowan, guitar; Lamar Grier, banjo; and Bill's son, James William Monroe, bass. Many thanks are in order to Decca Records for including all the recording data pertinent to this LP. The sessions dates range from March 20, 1963 to January 23, 1967, which say, in effect, that all of the bands heard on this record are not the present ensemble. By the spring of 1967, all but Jimmy Monroe had left for other fields of endeavor. So, the task of providing an album of Bill Monroe exactly as he and his band are today will necessarily involve Decca's producing and releasing a record in almost the same breath.

My first impression of the singing on this album forced me to recall the slick, toned-down, almost lifeless vocals of the Bluegrass Gentlemen (Liberty LRP 3214, ca. 1960). Good standards like I WONDER WHERE YOU ARE TONIGHT, ALL THE GOOD TIMES ARE PASSED AND GONE and WHEN MY BLUE MOON TURNS TO GOLD AGAIN lose their luster and charm, as well as the musical charge which is classically related to Monroe's mode of singing. The biting tenor is absent, the driving power which is bluegrass at its best has been harnessed and subdued. A related factor which could help contribute toward this washed-out feeling could be placed at the feet of the people responsible for assembling the multi-track masters into the "finished" product. A great deal of echo-chamber effect was utilized, and many of the best notes, as a consequence, were absorbed into the void of the echo. Throughout the LP, the banjo, I suspect, was literally smothered. The uneven balance between the banjo and the other instruments appears directly attributable to either poor microphone placement or the timid Nashville-oriented mixing technicians in the editing room.

A peculiar occurrence which I observed on the three above mentioned songs was Monroe's insistence on singing

lead on the verses, then singing tenor harmony on the chorus, with son Jimmy filling the lead position in the part work. Monroe's device of pitching his lead singing too low, and, consequently, his tenor not high enough on the chorus in order to accomodate his son encumbers the tunes with less than strong lead on the verses and decidedly weak lead on the choruses. This strategy cost much of the fire which could have otherwise been achieved in the vocal aspects of the songs. The end result, unfortunately, could be equated with a partial emasculation of the intended purposes of the record as a reliable representation of bluegrass itself.

Additional personal information can also be pertinent to the quasi-failure of this record. For some inexplicable reason, Monroe seems to have delayed too long in taking this particular band into the recording studio. For approximately a year and a half he was hesitant to "trust" his sidemen in the acid-test studios. Consequently, the longer he procrastinated, the more insecure he made his band feel. Perhaps Monroe had his reasons, musically, for some of the efforts on this record barely got off the ground. On the other hand, by his indirect lack of faith in his band, he also weakened the very fiber of his overall sound.

Returning to the remainder of the album, it is evident that there is a good deal of variety in subject matter, as well as quality of performance. The instrumentals, TURKEY IN THE STRAW and DUSTY MILLER, exhibit the best in aggressive mandolin picking. Monroe's clarity and strong lead on his mandolin stand out as highlights of the album. Richard Greene's very distinctive fiddling style helps to bring these instrumentals in line with the great tunes of some of the other Monroe bands of the middle 50's, such as PANHANDLE COUNTRY, ROANOKE and CHEYENNE. The only sacred number on the record is a Monroe original and features Bill all the way, with no part singing whatsoever, on WERE YOU THERE? One tune which undeservedly appears is IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE NOW. The delivery is choppy, due to the double-time bass line as well as the nature of the rhythm of the song itself. The thematic material is unimaginative and trite, but, basically, the song definitely does not lend itself to the bluegrass idiom no matter how determined the effort. The only conclusion available is that it was a mistake to release this on a record, let alone work it up for any performance. BLUE NIGHT is a hauntingly different tune very ably performed. The demeanor hints of a modal approach, but actually is not. The textual material treats modern day love problems, complete with multiple cliches and no particular story line. The deceptive last two phrases of Autry Inman's THAT'S ALL RIGHT are unique in the bluegrass repertoire, and indeed they are not of bluegrass creation, but



rather adapted, more or less succesfully, by Monroe in this adequate arrangement. The traditional tunes, PRETTY FAIR MAIDEN IN THE GARDEN and MIDNIGHT ON THE STORMY DEEP, create a breath of fresh air in the album and a recreation of the ballad form in a bluegrass setting. ROLL ON, BUDDY, ROLL ON very questionably "written" by the "modern bluegrass" proponents Teddy and Doyle Wilburn, proves to be right in the groove for a zestful bluegrass vehicle, and it seems to have many of the indigenous qualities which made NINE POUND HAMMER a standard in the idiom.

In summation, this record is better than some of the LP's Bill has released, however, it is with reluctance that it could only fit into the better-than-average category and not rank in the class of the exceptional.

-Scott Hambly



KING JAMES says:

After I finished my bible, I was bored. But my ennui fled when I began reading The Khrome Kazoo, a west coast folk music magazine published by The San Diego Folk Music Foundation. For \$4.00 you can get 10 big issues just like I do. Here are some of the features:

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OLD TIME SOUTHERN DANCE MUSIC: BALLADS AND SONGS  
 Old-Timey LP-102 \*\*\*\*½

The "survey" seems to be one of the most effective ways of constructing a reissue, and, in these early days of reissuing, the survey album is still quite broad in its coverage. Though there are somewhat limited surveys, covering railroad songs, cowboy songs and such, the vast

majority seek to gather groups of "fiddle tunes," "sacred music" and, in the case of this album, "ballads and songs."

This particular reissue is quite well constructed. In fact, it has garnered a more effective grouping of songs and ballads than any similar reissue to date. It is evenly divided between songs and ballads, and the most important influences on these areas in Southern Anglo-American music are musically well documented.

The area of English ballads is represented by the Coon Creek Girls' PRETTY POLLY (Laws P36b) an excellent, full text, performed in an exciting style by this eminent Kentucky string band, led by banjoist Lily Mae Leford. Also present, is a version of THE BUTCHER BOY (Laws P24) one of the most popular British imports, under the name THAT FATAL COURSHIP, performed by an unknown string band, The Henpecked Husbands. The last British ballad present is BLACK JACK DAVID (Child 200) by the Carlisle Brothers, Cliff and Bill. Cliff learned this song from T. Texas Tyler, an Oklahoma swingster, and adapted it to his own flowing, swingy style that he cultivated in the late 1930's. I am sure the venerable Prof. Child, were he alive to hear it today, would have more than a few things to say about it.

Ballads originating in this country are represented by four well-chosen items. The most interesting is FRANKIE SILVERS (Laws E13) by one of Clarence Ashley's old bands, the Hotshots, led by Byrd Moore. The ballad is native to North Carolina and is supposedly the farewell or "good-night" of Frankie Silvers, the first woman executed in the state, for the murder of her husband. This is, to my knowledge, the only early commercial recording of this ballad. One standard native American ballad is ROSE CONLEY (Laws F6), and is performed here by the great team of George B. Grayson (fiddle and vocal) and Henry Whitter (guitar). From the minstrel stage and music hall of the mid-Nineteenth Century comes ON THE OLD PLANTATION, performed beautifully by the Blue Sky Boys, which is a ballad in the loss-of-sweetheart-or-home syndrome, found in such parallel items as LITTLE LOG CABIN IN THE LANE, KITTY WELLS, and DARLING NELLY GRAY. One topical ballad, based on a 1908 Cleveland school disaster, is the Dixon Brothers' SCHOOLHOUSE FIRE, and is an excellent example of this area of American balladry.

Turning to parallels in the song or lyric area, we come first upon songs whose roots lie in British tradition. Song, being structurally less rigid than the ballad, is subject to more change and variation. Therefore, songs are less likely to contain purely original British verses; rather, American tradition adds to, changes, and otherwise transforms non-native material.

An excellent example is HANDSOME MOLLY, undoubtedly of English or Irish origin, which, in the hands of singers and musicians like Grayson and Whitter, becomes a hybrid item. The same can be seen in even greater proportion in IT'S HARD TO LEAVE YOU by McDaniel and Smith. A LITTLE LOVE, by Wade Mainer, is one of the broadest examples not only of Anglo-American hybridization, but of the traditional artists' tendency to borrow lines and verses from several different sources in order to "compose" a new song. Traditional artists often claim to have composed such well known items as THE HOUSE CARPENTER, BURY ME NOT ON THE LONE PRARIE, etc., which urban scholars and students find troublesome, almost unreconcilable with previous training. But this sense of "composing" is purely traditional as the artist has undoubtedly added his own textual or musical touches and has thus "composed" the song.

One important area, difficult to document, is that of Afro-American influences on Anglo-American music, whether it be in the origin of an entire ballad, or only certain phrases or maverick verses, as well as tunes and tune influences. OLD REUBEN, played on banjo by Wade Mainer, is a song whose home base lies, probably, in North Carolina, Mainer's home state. This song reveals strong Negro influence, but to what degree is difficult to say. DEEP ELM, by a Southwestern band, the Lone Star Cowboys, is undoubtedly a product of East Texas Negro tradition. The only Negro-derived ballad on this disc, FRANKIE DEAN (FRANKIE AND ALBERT), by Tom Darby and Jimmie Tarlton reveals Negro influences not only in the origins of the song itself, but in Tarlton's heavily Negro-influenced acoustical steel guitar playing.

Two interesting songs, truly hybrids, are ROY DIXON, by Jimmie Tarlton, and FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT'S BACK AGAIN, by Bill Cox and Cliff Hobbs. The former song is a collation of verses related to the PRISONER'S SONG-complex, but alludes to specific names and places (Roy Dixon, Kilby Jail). Further, it reflects Negro influences and, certainly, influences of commercial country music of the 1920's. The latter song was written by Cox and Hobbs in their New York hotelroom the day of the 1936 election. It reveals, mostly, the composing style of Bill Cox, and interesting musician and composer from West Virginia, caught up in the drives of country music.

All in all, the selection is well-balanced, representative and portrays the many-faceted appearance of Anglo-American traditions in the South. But there are criticisms. My major one is with the notes, which are quite terrible. Toni Brown has managed to miss any of the continuity, not only of the traditions represented, but of the entire

record itself, as it is a distinct and meaningful whole. She portrays the record only as a series of rare, recorded performances, and includes a multitude of repetitious factual material, poorly organized, wasting precious note space. Aside from the basic blunder of not seeing a representative whole, she advances inaccuracies in a writing style that definitely leaves something needed. A few examples should suffice;

"PRETTY POLLY comes from the English ballad THE GOSPORT TRAGEDY. It is again the familiar theme of the man murdering his true love; this time because he has got her with child and wants to be rid of her. This is the common motive for many similar ballads such as...MARY FAGAN."

Aside from the fact that a phrase like "got her with child" went out with Samuel Pepys and Sir John Suckling, and that the style lacks balance and continuity, such a statement that MARY FAGAN (actually Phagan) was a "true love" murdered by her lover "because he has got her with child..." simply will not do! Mary Phagan was sexually assaulted and murdered by someone she had not had any dealings with, down in the romantic depths of a Southern pencil factory.

Another example;

"The ballad (THE BUTCHER BOY) has been recorded many times, usually with a different melody, however, often in a minor or modal key."

First of all, are we to believe that 'minor' and 'modal' are one in the same terms? (They aren't). Or does Miss Brown mean that the song is usually sung in a minor mode, or in another one of the seven ecclesiastical modes (Mixolydian, Phrygian, etc.) other than major (Ionian), as is the version on this record? Also incorrect. Commercially recorded versions have been major quite as many times as they have been "modal" and are never minor (standard minor being the Aeolian mode).

The notes continue on through inaccuracies, repetitions, and all but useless facts (useless, at least, in this context) and the listener is not brought any indications of the one tradition and its many influences, via the notes. Fortunately, however, the performances, both as valid documents and exciting musical fare, make the record worth buying by anyone interested in traditional American music, and were it not for the poor notes, it would have sailed through on five stars.

-Graham Wickham

To anyone who likes country blues — especially those emanating from what S.B. Charters describes as the Mississippi "Delta haze" ( a newly discovered level in the great Chain of Being, no doubt) — this entire set of 78 rpm records is indispensable. Besides, it's a mind-blowing experience to receive, by way of mail, records which have genuine looking Herwin labels on them. (Herwin was a St. Louis mail order record company in the 1920's and early 30's which used Paramount and Gennett masters, so that you can find Charley Patton on Herwin as "Charley Peters", for example). The labels are printed in vintage type stating such data as (on Herwin 92400) "Booker T. White; 'Po' Boy/Sic 'Em Dogs On." Let's begin with that record. These two sides, recorded on May 24, 1939, at Parchman Farm are two of the best "Bukka" ever made. The songs, intact, have never been put on disc until now. Unlocked, finally, from the grip of the Library of Congress, the public may now hear a side or, rather, two sides which they could never have heard before. And Booker is at his best. What could be better?

Try Herwin 92401, JINX BLUES and PONY BLUES. The first is very Pattonesque with string snapping and all, here performed by Son House when he was still in his prime. JINX BLUES and PONY BLUES are certainly the best cuts from this L. of C. field session.

The same is true of 92404. The Paramount Willie Brown appears for the first time alone, since his last session for Paramount in 1930. He does a fine version of MAKE ME A PALLET ON THE FLOOR, perhaps a bit dusty or rusty, but it does swing, and there's plenty of Delta Haze! You can almost see it in the wax, feel it in your nostrils as your phono-cartridge or grafonola needle heats it up. Wow! The reverse by Son House again is a faster version of the aforementioned PONY... here called SHETLAND PONY BLUES, complete with an extra stanza and a Pea Vine or I. C. Railroad train steaming by in rhythm. Both versions, fast and slow, are worth having. I prefer the slow.


Herwin 92402 is a recent piano accompanied record, FOUR O'CLOCK BLUES/HOW LONG BLUES, both of which are probably Skip James' best piano cuts since his 1931 session—bar none, and I've heard all that has been commercially issued as well as most that has not.

Herwin 92403 is a guitar accompanied record, again by Skip playing DRUNKEN SPREE, a version of I'VE GOT THE MOURNING BLUES by Uncle Dave Macon with Sam McGee accompanying him on guitar, and whether Sam played it faster than Skip plays it here is difficult to say. ILLINOIS BLUES, the reverse side, is one of his best songs and again the best recording of that song that I've heard.

They're \$2.00 a piece and all beautiful records in more ways than one. Help support these reissues and write to Herwin Records, Box 306, Glen Cove, N.Y. 11542.

By the way, there are only a few left and there will be no more pressings. The set is rather expensive, but if you buy them you'll never regret it, whether you believe in Delta Haze or not.

-john fahey



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DOWN WITH THE GAMES, Vol. 1 D-200 \*\*\*\*\*  
DOWN WITH THE GAMES, Vol. 2 D-201 \*\*\*\*

These are the first two offerings of a new reissue label started by knowledgeable British blues collector Peter Brown, and with them the series is off to a splendid start. Perhaps the best way to indicate just how impressive these LPs are is to list the contents of each.

Volume 1 contains Bukka White's 1940 HIGH FEVER BLUES and WHEN CAN I CHANGE MY CLOTHES?, the latter a fine variant of Bukka's earlier recorded SHAKE 'EM ON DOWN. Both performances, which have splendid vocal and guitar work by White, also feature a strong washboard accompaniment, possibly by Bull City Red, Blind Boy Fuller's rhythm partner. Then there are

two arresting pieces by singer-guitarist Charlie Jordan of St. Louis, the bizarre, lovely CUTTIN' MY ABC's and CHIFFEROBE. Two very fine performances are Memphis singer-guitarist Little Buddy Doyle's SWEET MAN BLUES and THREE SIXTY-NINE BLUES. Unfortunately for collectors, the two tracks by Memphis Minnie, JITIS BLUES and FRANKIE JEAN, duplicate earlier-released selections on the Blues Classics label (in the second set of Minnie performances on that label). The two pieces by singer-pianist Little David Alexander are just superb; ORIGINAL SWEET PATUNIA (sic) and STANDING BY A LAMPOST both feature simple, beautifully constructed piano accompaniments. High point of the album for this listener is the absolutely magnificent 1942 performance of BOOGIE WOOGIE WOMAN by singer-guitarist Robert Petway; I find this dark, hoarse singing unbelievably exciting. Next are two representative pieces by Mississippi's Big Joe Williams PLEASE DON'T GO (the singer's second, 1941, recording of the tune) and BREAK 'EM ON DOWN, both with harmonica player Sonny Boy Williamson and bassist Alfred Elkins: strong, spare performances with real muscle. Tommy Griffin's 1936 MISERABLE LIFE BLUES rounds out an excellent collection, the major emphasis of which is upon the later permutations of country blues style.

The second album similarly investigates this middle area, though is perhaps not so striking as the first LP. It is only slightly less interesting, however, and contains some truly lovely blues.

Singer-steel guitarist Casey Billy Weldon is poorly represented on LP, and the two tracks he has here, GONNA TAKE MY TIME and SOMEBODY CHANGED THE LOCK ON THAT DOOR (with pianist Black Bob on both, and mandolinist Charlie McCoy on the first), offer the most convincing kind of argument for further representation by this interesting artist. Furry Lewis' first two recordings, dating from 1927, are included; the first, EVERYBODY'S BLUES, which features the work of an unknown mandolinist, is not particularly distinguished, but the second, ROCK ISLAND BLUES, has quite nice singing and playing from Furry. There are two impressive pieces by singer-guitarist Poor Boy Lofton, dating from 1935; the first DIRTY MISTREATER reveals him as one of the best Tommy Johnson emulators ever to record.

Then there is Walter Davis' widely imitated I THINK YOU NEED A SHOT; this 1936 recording features a lovely sample of Davis' unaffected, deliberate piano style. Walter Roland sings his RED CROSS BLUES No. 2 and backs up singer-guitarist Sonny Scott on the latter's NO GOOD BIDDIE. Three tracks feature the accomplished singing and guitar playing of Bo Carter (that is, Bo Chatman of the Mississippi Chatmans): SUE COW (sic) and FLEA ON ME date from 1936 and are cast in the double-entendre mold in which this performer was so often recorded; so too, his PUSSY CAT BLUES but, having been recorded five years earlier,

is a bit fresher and more vigorous-sounding than the later efforts in the genre. The guitar work on this earlier track is delightful, much less formulized than the accompaniments on the other two tracks. Finally, there are two fine cuts by singer-guitarist Robert Nighthawk, recording then (1936) as Robert Lee McCoy, though his real name was McCollum. PROWLIN' NIGHT-HAWK and C.N.A. are representative tracks by this excellent bluesman, whose singing is full of a somber, ominous power. Sonny Boy Williamson is heard on harmonica on both tracks and Joe Williams provides a second guitar line on the first selection, being replaced by the piano of Walter Davis on the second.

The albums are obtainable from Peter Brown at 2 Ambleside Gardens, Streatham, S.W. 16, London England. The reproduction on both is excellent.

-Pete Welding

EVER SINCE I HAVE BEEN A MAN FULL GROWN, J.B. Smith

Takoma B-1009 \*\*\*

LOUISIANA BLUES, Robert Pete Williams Takoma B-1011 \*\*\*\*\*

These two Takoma releases are most welcome at a time when few records of contemporary Negro folk music, except amplified Chicago bands, are being produced. Both records contain detailed insert notes, setting a high standard for other companies, and are attractively packaged, especially the Williams album with its striking cover.

For the last several years, I have considered Williams to be the greatest bluesman ever to have recorded, bar none. His inventiveness, while firmly rooted in blues tradition, has been unmatched - not merely on guitar or in lyrics or singing, but in all these areas. Perhaps the only other approaching him in this inventiveness has been John Lee Hooker in his early period. In view of Robert Pete's past performances, this album is a bit disappointing. Much of his singing and playing simply does not have the bite of his earlier records on Prestige and Folk Lyric labels. He sounds tired on several cuts, as if he were singing the fifth take of a song at the end of an all day recording session. This is particularly noticeable on side one. His singing often trails off at the ends of lines and sounds matter-of-fact. The guitar playing often strikes one as being too fast. All the songs on this side have a similarly fast duple rhythm - poor planning by the producer.

SOMEBODY HELP POOR ME seems influenced by several Howlin' Wolf hits and the old Mississippi Shiiks' STOP AND LISTEN BLUES. Williams' song, however, lacks the falsetto of the others. FREIGHT TRAIN BLUES and I'M GOIN' DOWN SLOW are distinguished mainly by their flashes of brilliance on the guitar. IT'S HARD TO TELL is the outstanding cut on this side. Beginning with a guitar chorus that mixes overtones and fretted notes, it continues with strong singing that doesn't trail off, as well as stunning guitar work. MOTHERLESS CHILDREN HAVE A HARD TIME



simply does not match up to the great version on Folk-Lyric (LFS A-3), especially in the area of rhythm. The Takoma version is simply too fast.

The second side begins with Williams' greatest composition, recorded for Prestige as I'VE GROWN SO UGLY. ...UGLY on Takoma does not match up to the earlier version; the singing sometimes trailing off, and the guitar work less distinctive. The few additions to the lyrics, however, are worthy of the original. With the next song, SO LONG BOOGIE, the album begins to pick up steam. Almost mercifully, there is a major change of rhythm, as Robert Pete goes into a strong, triplet boogie beat. The singing is very strong, making this a most effective piece all around. THIS IS A MEAN OLD WORLD TO ME is slow with a brooding guitar part in the key of B! With fine singing, he tells how he is sorry to have been born a boy child. HIGH AS I WANT TO BE is a nice contrast from preceding piece, having a "major" cast to it instead of the "minor" effect which Williams employs in so many of his songs. The final piece, IT'S A LONG OLD ROAD, is very nice, conceptually, and contains excellent lyrics. It is less intense, more tender lyrically than many of his pieces, but the singing sometimes trails off.

Although I have spent many words criticizing this album, it is still full of fine music and is the only album by Robert Pete Williams currently available. Even slightly inferior Robert Pete is far better than almost anything else around. It still deserves five stars. The notes are excellent, being none other than Al Wilson's definitive article on Robert Pete which appeared in LSR, vol. 2, nos. 1 and 2. Unfortunately, the editors have deleted Wilson's review of the artist's previous work, and there are no notes relevant to the selections on the album. Still, the notes alone are worth the price of the album. Highly recommended.

The J.B. Smith album is difficult to review. One wonders why a record of such limited appeal was ever released. Smith sings three interminably long unaccompanied prison songs, all to the same melody. Ideally, these songs are sung to accompany non-rhythmic work for the edification of nobody but the singer himself. His singing style reflects this. It is downright dull, an impression particularly heightened by his constant reliance on the minor third. Smith's main appeal lies in his lyric creativity. He uses an unusual ABBA stanzaic pattern and composes lines that are an extension of the traditional prison lyrics. There are few repetitions in these songs, showing that Smith has a good command of his material. I would, however, disagree with Bruce Jackson, the writer of the notes and Smith's discoverer, who states that there is a general unity to the songs. The only unity I can perceive is the general prison experience. One could equally well say that his songs have a unity because they are all about life.

The notes are generally excellent, however, and give a good background to the singer, the songs, and the context of this

kind of music in prison life, with extensive quotations of Smith's own words. Finally, there are (at last) accurate transcriptions of the lyrics. I must take issue with Jackson, though, when he compares Smith's compositions to "blues ballads" as defined by D.K. Wilgus. Smith's songs are in no way ballads, as they nowhere contain any trace of a coherent narrative thread, either implicit or explicit. Smith's pieces do not deal with a single event or series of events, only with the prison experience in general.

The chief value of this album is that it presents an extended portrait of singer-composer working in a limited style. Students of folklore, especially prison traditions, will be interested in it for that reason. Otherwise, the album has little musical value to recommend itself.

—David Evans

FROST AND FIRE    The Watersons    Topic & Elektra  
EKL 321    \*\*\*\*

Because of the dearth of releases by commercial record companies featuring good unaccompanied singing, especially by members of what has come to be known as "the urban folk revival," it is an event when a recording such as this appears on the general market. This album, featuring Michael, Norman and Elaine Waterson and their cousin John, was made by Topic and released by Elektra.

It consists of seasonal English ceremonial songs—some familiar (HERE WE COME A-WASSAILING, THE DARBY RAM, THE HOLLY BEARS A BERRY, CHRISTMAS IS NOW DRAWING NEAR AT HAND, JOHN BARLEYCORN, SOULING SONG) and some that sound familiar enough to whet the appetite for the other selections.

The Watersons come from Hull, a port town in Yorkshire. Their harmony, reminiscent of the famous Copper family, entered British tradition via classical and church compositions. One doesn't hear much of it among the folk of England, many group singers of folk songs preferring to sing in unison or with simpler harmonies. The Watersons, being related, have an especially close vocal blend, yet it never becomes a slick one. Although Yorkshire is rich in traditional material, the Watersons learned most of their repertoire after they went to London and became involved with folk music activity there. They claim that the harmony they use is just what comes naturally. A.L. Lloyd is responsible for much of their present repertoire. For more biographical details see Sandy Darlington's article in "The Khrome Kazoo" (issue #6). (See the Khrome Kazoo advertisement elsewhere in this issue of LSR).

This album affords excellent selection of material, covering harvest songs, mid-winter ceremonies, spring carols connected with May celebrations, Hallowe'en forays

and Easter songs. The singing, which is entirely unaccompanied, never becomes tedious, although some of the cutesy vocal tricks used as lead-ins are in questionable taste. On the whole, however, the vocal style is imaginative and grounded in tradition, and the Watsonsons have good control of their voices and style. The words are difficult to understand, at times; a definite liability to those who choose to sing unaccompanied, especially such songs as these, whose lyrics are almost everything in importance. They have managed to sing the more hackneyed songs with freshness, and HAL-AN-TOW, a May song that was used for the procession that ushered in the summer, stands out as a rousing delight.

The notes are excellent, although the introduction, in striving to be a survey of the evolution of British seasonal-ceremonial songs, tends to be simplistic and concludes on a somewhat patronising vein.

This is a valuable record for LSR readers whose proclivities lie in the area of Anglo-American traditional music, for those who are interested in the span of the urban revival, for the curious whose taste is eclectic and for those who don't know anything about folk music but who know what they like, who wish to graduate from Muzak without suffering withdrawal symptoms! In short, we recommend it to just about everyone but the die-hard Bluegrass lovers who don't care about any other forms of music, and scholars interested primarily in more esoteric seasonal material, who could do better with documentary recordings available in archives.

-Rita Weill

"canned heat's" bob hite

